

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

- Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme

This document contains important information related to the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme and guidelines for completing the application correctly. We recommend reading the guidelines carefully and having this document available while completing the application.

30 November 2020

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Part I: Information about the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme

About the programme

The Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme is an initiative for international students to launch their careers in the vibrant environment of the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) research centres.

Up to sixteen students will be recruited annually and will be selected based on academic achievements, research experience, academic references, and interviews.

The four-year programme is divided into a pre-doctoral year followed by three years of PhD training at one of the NNF research centres:

- Center for Basic Metabolic Research (CBMR)
- Center for Biosustainability (CFB)
- Center for Protein Research (CPR)
- Center for Stem Cell Biology (DanStem)

The NNF research centres are embedded at the University of Copenhagen (CBMR, CPR, DanStem), or the Technical University of Denmark (CFB). For more information about the centres:

<https://cph-bioscience.com/en/research>

During the first (pre-doctoral) year of training, all students follow a common curriculum that includes short lab-rotations, common courses, and selection of the PhD project. This provides the students with a comprehensive preparation for the following three years of PhD studies and allows the students to make an informed choice about which laboratory to join. Students are expected to make an agreement with a supervisor to host their PhD project after completing three two-week rotation projects at the beginning of the pre-doctoral year. The supervisor should be one of the rotation project supervisors. Therefore, students are expected to join a laboratory approximately two months into the pre-doctoral year. It is not recommended for applicants to contact potential supervisors before starting the programme. At the end of the pre-doctoral year, all awardees must pass an assessment in order to qualify for the following three years of PhD education.

For more information about the programme: <https://cphbiosciencephd.org/>

Eligibility criteria

The Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme is intended for international students to relocate to Denmark and start their research careers at one of the NNF research centres.

- Applicants must submit an on-line application form before the deadline: 12 January 2021 (14.00 CET).
- At the time of starting the programme, applicants must hold a degree from a university outside Denmark. The programme is also open for applicants with Danish degrees who have full-time research experience from outside Denmark for at least one year (if confirmed by a reference).
- At the time of starting the programme, applicants must hold a university degree that formally qualifies them to enter a PhD programme (i.e. they must be at an academic level equivalent to a Master's degree).
- The applicant should not have worked or studied at any of the NNF research centres before joining the programme. Current or recent Master's students and research assistants at the NNF research centres are not eligible to apply.
- The applicant must provide a minimum of two academic references. References should preferentially be from established research scientists that have supervised the applicant in a lab setting, or alternatively may be from academic teachers that know the applicant well.
- If the applicant is not a native English speaker, proof of English proficiency such as a valid TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge Advanced English, or GRE certificate must be provided. If the applicant has completed prior studies in English at university-level, proof of English proficiency will not be required. However, this must be indicated clearly in the applicant's CV.

Funding

- The NNF will provide up to four years of funding for each student. The funding covers the full salary and tuition fees. All fellowships will be administered by the host institutions of the centres.
- During the first year, the student is employed at their respective university and receives a pre-doctoral fellowship to cover their salary.
- Programme members are not formally enrolled as PhD students until the beginning of the second year of the programme.
- In years 2-4, the students will be formally enrolled as PhD students at their host institution and receive a PhD fellowship to cover their salary and tuition fees.
- Students that fail in their qualifying exam at the end of the pre-doctoral year will not receive funding for years 2-4.

Application process

International students will be recruited once per year through a competitive interview process. The interviews usually take place in Copenhagen. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 interviews will take place online.

The interview process will include:

- An introduction to the research at the four NNF Research Centers
- One-on-one meetings with potential supervisors of interest
- Meeting current Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme students and other applicants
- A panel interview with the admissions panel (Group Leaders from the four NNF Research Centers)

The Programme Coordinator will contact selected applicants after they have received notification that they have been selected for interview, to exchange more information about the interview process.

When applying for the programme, the applicant must select which research centre they wish to join.

Applicants are required to explain their interest in chosen supervisors and/or research topics in the application form. Please note that indicating a specific supervisor in the application does not commit the applicant to join, or do a rotation project, in that particular lab. Students joining the programme will be asked to make rotation project choices after starting the programme and will make an agreement with one of their supervisors to join their lab after completing the rotation projects. There is no guarantee that the student will be able to join the preferred PhD supervisor, as it is important that this is mutually agreed between the student and supervisor after the rotation project period. A maximum of one programme student per year can join each supervisor's lab for their PhD.

The applicant must provide the name and contact details of two referees in the application form. The referees will be contacted via the application system and asked to provide their reference in the online system. The applicant will not be able to see the referee's comments but will be able to see if their referee has submitted a recommendation. **Please note that it will not be possible to submit the application until two referees have provided their references.** The applicant should contact their referees in advance to make sure they are able to submit their recommendation in the online system before the application deadline.

The application must be completed and submitted using the NNF web-based application system, which can be accessed on the NNF homepage: <http://novonordiskfonden.dk/da/cphbiosciencephd> (press "Apply" in the upper right corner of the page).

Important dates:

- Applications can be submitted from 8 October 2020.
- Application deadline is **12 January 2021 (14.00 CET)**.
- Up to 40 applicants will be invited to interviews and up to an additional 20 will be placed on a waiting list. All applicants will be informed of the results in mid-February 2021.
- Interviews will take place online on **23-26 March 2021**.
- Final decisions will be communicated in **April 2021**.
- Selected students will start the programme in September 2021.

Please note that the NNF does not provide feedback if the application is not selected for funding.

Contact**For questions about the application process or general questions about the programme:**

- Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme Coordinator
- cphbiosciencephd@sund.ku.dk

For questions related to the application system:

- phdprogramme@novo.dk

For specific questions about the NNF research centres:

- Center for Basic Metabolic Research:
Sarah Vigh Christoffersen, Senior Advisor, sarah.christoffersen@sund.ku.dk
- Center for Biosustainability:
Rebeca Thostrup, PhD Administrative Coordinator, retho@biosustain.dtu.dk
- Center for Protein Research:
Marie Tollonaere-Larsen, Research and PhD Coordinator, marie.larsen@cpr.ku.dk
- Center for Stem Cell Biology:
Naomi Dayan, Senior Advisor, PhD Coordinator, students-danstem@sund.ku.dk

Part II: Guidelines for completing the application

General instructions

Filling in the fields

- All fields must be completed in accordance with these guidelines and the instructions provided in the application form. If there is any discrepancy between the instructions in the application form and these guidelines, the instructions in the application form take preference.
- Abbreviations should be defined the first time they are used.
- The maximum character limit for each text field may not be exceeded. Character counts include spaces, but not line changes.
- **To prevent loss of data, it is essential to press "Save Draft" before you leave the application system or navigate other sections in the system.**

Submission

- The application must be submitted electronically via the NNF's application system. It is not possible to submit an application or any part of it by standard mail or email.
- Please note that references must be provided through the system in order to submit your application.
- It is only possible to submit one application per centre. If the applicant submits applications to more than one centre, they will all be considered.
- If the applicant wishes to make changes to a submitted application before the submission deadline, it is possible for the applicant to re-open the application. Please be aware that a re-opened application must be re-submitted before the deadline to be evaluated.
- Applications cannot be modified after the submission deadline: 12 January 2021 (14.00 CET).
- Once the application has been submitted, a confirmation of receipt will be sent to the applicant via the email address provided in the application. If the applicant does not receive a confirmation of receipt, the applicant should contact the NNF as soon as possible by sending an email to the following address: phdprogramme@novo.dk.

Confidentiality

- All applicant and application information will be treated as confidential.

NNF's standards for use of personal information:

In connection with the NNF's processing of your personal information you are entitled to:

- 1) Request access to processed personal information about you,
- 2) Object to the processing of your personal information, and
- 3) To have incorrect or misleading personal information or personal information processed in violation of mandatory law deleted, corrected or blocked.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation, Tuborg Havnevej 19, 2900 Hellerup is the data controller and LXP Consulting, Arne Jacobsens Allé 16, 3. Sal, 2300 København S, may as data processor receive and process personal information on behalf of the Novo Nordisk Foundation.

New user registration

- To apply for the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme the applicant must register as a user in the NNF grant application system.
- The NNF grant application system can be accessed through the "Apply now" link on the NNF website: <http://novonordiskfonden.dk/en/content/copenhagen-bioscience-phd-programme>. The link leads to the login site, where a new user registration link is found beneath the login for existing users "Register as an applicant".

Notes for new user registration

- Please enter first name, last name, email address, gender, nationality, country, and date of birth in the registration form. Then press "Submit".
- You will receive an email with your first-time password to access the system.
- After your first login, you must change your password. Your password must contain both letters and numbers and have a minimum of 8 characters.

Creating and completing your profile

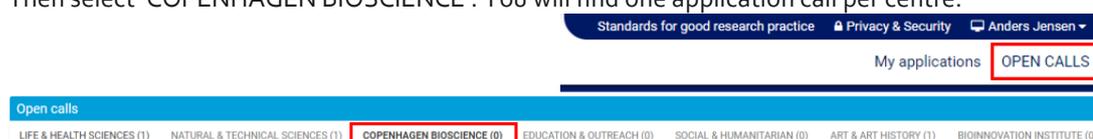
- After login, you need to update your profile in order to apply.
- Press the small arrow next to your name in the upper right corner and choose "My profile".

Personal information:

- Please fill in all mandatory fields. Mandatory fields are indicated with a red asterisk (*).
- If you have an ORCID¹ please provide that in your profile.

Creating and completing your application

- Select 'OPEN CALLS' in the top right corner (note that this is only possible while the call is open). Then select 'COPENHAGEN BIOSCIENCE'. You will find one application call per centre.



- Select the centre that you wish to apply to by clicking 'Apply Now'. You can apply to more than one centre, but you can only submit one application per centre.
- The "Main" and "Invitations" tabs are in the left-hand menu.
- Under the "Main" tab, you must fill in all information needed for your application. Please read the instructions in the "Show/Hide instructions" section at the top of the page.
- Under the "Invitations" tab, you must provide the names and email addresses of two academic references. **Please note that you need two references in order to submit your application. You must ensure your referees are contacted in due time before the application deadline.**
- After having invited two or more referees, you can view the status of their invitation and whether their references have been submitted using the "View Referee Form Status" button above the application tabs. You will also be notified by email when a reference is submitted. Note that you will not be able to see the actual references yourself.

MAIN

- Some information on the "Applicant" tab is pulled from your user profile and cannot be edited on the application form itself. Should you need to update this information, you can access your profile in the upper right corner of the form (as described in the section "Creating and updating your profile"). The updated information will become visible in your application.
- Then update the following three sections by clicking on the relevant tabs: "Motivation", "Appendices", and "Declarations".
- When filling in the textboxes, you can copy text from a Word processing program or write directly in the box.

¹ ORCID (<https://orcid.org/>) is an independent non-profit ID that is used to identify scientific authors. Please provide your ORCID in this format: 1234-1234-1234-1234.

Application PDF

View Referee Form Status

APPLICANT MOTIVATION APPENDICES DECLARATIONS

APPLICANT TAB

Education

- Please provide information about your educational background. You may enter a maximum of three degrees. Please start with your most recent degree.
- If you are still enrolled as a student and did not yet receive your degree, please provide information about the degree you expect to complete, your expected graduation date, and calculate an estimate of your GPA based on your grades so far. Please note that you must be able to provide your degree certificate by August 2021.
- Select type of degree in the drop-down menu. If your degree is not on the list, please select "other" and specify the degree in the text-field that appears.
- Enter your Grade Point Average (GPA) converted to the US system using 4.0 scale. Please use <https://www.scholaro.com/gpa-calculator/> for conversion.
- Enter information about your "Original grade/score" if you have converted your grades.
- Provide a short explanatory text (e.g. title/subject and any other relevant information) about your degree.
- If relevant, please provide information about any additional degrees that you have obtained.

Current Occupation

- Please choose the type/area of occupation. Depending on your choice fill in the appropriate information.
- If your academic institution does not appear in the search, please check the box: "My institution is not in the list", and then provide the name of your institution in the text-field.

Experience

- Indicate your total number of **months** of independent research experience. Independent research experience refers to time spent in a laboratory or other research environment, most likely working full-time and conducting a research project driven independently of any study programme.
- In the text box, provide a description of your independent research experience. Include information about the research project, the lab (specifying the institution and supervisor), and the duration of your project. You may also include information about unpaid internships or projects, making clear if they were unpaid or part of any study programme, and describing aspects of the project that you worked on independently.
- If relevant, please provide information about peer-reviewed publications, grants, and awards.
- Character limits, and the number of used characters, are indicated below the text fields.

MOTIVATION TAB

- In the first text box, describe your research background and your research interests. Explain why you are a good fit for the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme and the research centre you are applying to. If you are also applying to another research centre, you can mention that here.
- In the second text box, explain your interest in specific research area(s) and/or supervisor(s) (from the [list of potential supervisors](#)) at the centre you selected. Applicants are encouraged to list a minimum of two supervisors that they are interested in.
- Character limits, and the number of used characters, are indicated below the text fields.

APPENDICES TAB

- Upload a **one-page** CV in pdf-format. You can upload this by pressing the blue "Upload" button in the "File Manager". Drag and drop files or use the "Browse" button to find the file to upload.

- Please note that you can only upload one file and that it cannot be larger than one A4 page. After uploading your CV in the file manager, close the File Manger window by pressing the "X" in the upper right corner.
- Upload your diplomas and grade lists. If your diplomas and grade lists were issued in a language other than English or any of the Scandinavian languages, you must also provide an official translation to English. Translations of university degrees must be provided by the university or by an official translator and should be stamped accordingly.
- If required, please upload documentation for English proficiency. Proof of English proficiency is not required if you have completed a university degree in English. We accept TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, Cambridge Advanced English, or other internationally recognized certifications of English language proficiency.
- You can upload files by pressing the blue "Upload" button as seen below. In the "File Manager", you can then drag and drop, or use the "Browse" button to find the file to upload.



- Please note that you can only upload pdf-files.
- After uploading your documents, close the File Manger window by pressing the "X" in the upper right corner.

If you cannot provide your diploma(s) or English test results before the deadline, you should clearly explain the reason in your application, as well as the expected date that the test results will be provided (no later than 18 January 2021 for English test results; or August 2021 for diplomas).

DECLARATIONS TAB

- To be able to submit your application, you must approve that the Novo Nordisk Foundation share the information provided in the application with the Human Resources departments at the University of Copenhagen or the Technical University of Denmark in order to assess your qualifications for the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme.

INVITATIONS

- Your application must be supported by a minimum of two references. We recommend that at least one of the two referees has directly supervised you during your independent research experience, or other lab project work. Academic supervisors (or teachers) who know the applicant well are also acceptable referees.
- You may invite more than two referees, but we recommend two or three as optimal.
- Provide the name (first and last) and email address of your referee. Select 'Referee' under the 'Role' heading.
- For each referee you wish to add, click the "+" icon and fill in the fields that appear.
- After filling in the fields, click "Invite". The system will send an email to the referee asking them to accept to be a referee. The status will change to 'Invited' in your application.
- Once your referee accepts to provide a reference, the status will change from 'Invited' to 'Accepted'.
- When your referee submits their reference, you will receive a notification to the email address that you have used to register.
- It is your own responsibility to make sure that you have a minimum of two references before the application deadline. Please note that you will not be notified if one of your referees declines. However, you can follow the status of your invitation using the "View Referee Form Status" button on the application form. The status will be indicated as one of the following three categories:
 1. 'Accepted' means that the referee has accepted the online invitation and should have received an email with login details to the application platform.
 2. 'Draft' means that the referee has logged in to the application system, but the reference has not been submitted yet.
 3. 'Submitted' means the referee has submitted the reference.

Accessing and submitting your application

- After your application has been created, and while it is in the process of being completed, you can access your application through "My applications" in the "In progress" tab. You can open and edit your application from here.
- You can view your application at any time as a pdf by pressing the blue "Application PDF" button.
- Please remember to save a draft before generating the pdf.
- When all mandatory fields have been completed, and when two referees have submitted their references, you will be able to submit your application. If any mandatory information is missing from your application, you will not be able to submit your application. In this case the system will let you know what is missing, and clicking on the missing piece of information will take you directly to the field on the application form
- You can submit your application and re-open it any time to add information before the deadline. Please remember to re-submit your application as a final step.

The screenshot shows a web interface for an application form. At the top, there is a light blue bar with the text "CLICK HERE TO SHOW/HIDE INSTRUCTIONS". Below this, there are two buttons: "Application PDF" and "View Referee Form Status". A navigation bar contains the tabs "APPLICANT", "MOTIVATION", "APPENDICES", and "DECLARATIONS", with "DECLARATIONS" being the active tab. The main content area has a heading "Please agree with the following statement:" followed by a text input field. Below that, there is a section titled "Please confirm that you have uploaded the following documents:" with a list of three items: 1. One-page CV, 2. Diploma and grade lists (copy of the original documents and English translations), and 3. English Proficiency Test results (if you are not a native English speaker, or you have not previously completed your studies in English). At the bottom left, there is a "BACK" button, and at the bottom right, there is a "Reopen" button.

- After submitting the application, you will receive an email confirmation. If you do not receive an email confirmation, please contact the NNF (phdprogramme@novo.dk) immediately.
- Once submitted, your application will be moved from "In Progress" to the "Submitted" tab. From the "Submitted" tab, you can access your application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit in due time.
- To log out of the application and system, please select "logout" in the upper right corner.



IMPORTANT! You can submit your application and re-open it to correct or add information any time before the deadline. However, please remember to re-submit your application as a final step!

Part III: Frequently Asked Questions

My prior studies have been undertaken in English; do you still require proof of English proficiency?

No, if you have completed your university-level education in English, proof of English proficiency will not be required. Remember to indicate this in your application.

Which international English proficiency tests are accepted?

We accept all internationally recognized tests, including TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge Advanced English, or GRE.

Can I submit my English test results after the application deadline?

We strongly prefer that you submit your test results before the deadline. In exceptional circumstances, we may accept late test results, as long as the expected test date is provided in the application, and the test results can be provided before 18 January 2021.

My TOEFL/IELTS/GRE has expired; do I have to retake the test?

Yes, you should provide a valid test.

Is there a minimum score for the English test?

We do not define a minimum score cut-off. However, excellent English ability is essential for participants in the PhD Programme, as all supervision and teaching is conducted in English. Therefore, we recommend a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (B2), or TOEFL score of 80.

I received my Bachelor's degree in country other than Denmark, but am currently studying for my Master's degree in Denmark; can I apply for the programme?

The Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme is intended for international students to relocate to Denmark and start their research careers at one of the NNF research centres. Applicants currently studying for a Master's degree in Denmark are only eligible if they have obtained at least one year of full-time research experience from outside Denmark, confirmed by a reference letter. The applicant should not have previously worked or studied at any of the NNF research centres.

I received my Master's degree in Denmark; can I apply for the programme?

The programme is open for applicants with Danish degrees who have at least one year of full-time research experience from outside Denmark, confirmed by a reference letter. The applicant should not have previously worked or studied at any of the NNF research centres.

I am currently studying to receive my Master's degree but have not yet received it; can I still apply?

Yes, you can provide us with an official document from the University informing us of the expected completion date in the meantime. However, upon admission you must provide the university with the proper documentation to support your application.

I have received my degree in another language than English; do I need to get an official translation of my diploma and grade list?

Yes, unless your degree was issued in any of the Scandinavian languages.

Do I need to translate my grades to a certain grading system?

Yes, when applying you will be required to provide us with your Grade Point Average (GPA) translated to the US system. You should use [this](#) online calculator to convert your grades. You should also include your grades in the original format and explain the grading system used in the original. If you have not completed your degree, please provide an estimate of your GPA (in the original and US systems) based on your results so far.

Is there a minimum GPA score requirement?

We recommend a minimum GPA (US system) score of 3.0.

Do I have to provide you with two academic references?

Yes, at least two references are required. References should preferably come from scientists who have directly supervised you in an academic or industrial research environment.

Should I provide a letter of recommendation from my two academic referees?

No, you must provide the names and contact details of the referees that you wish to include in the application system. Your referees will then be asked to provide their reference directly into the application system. You will not be able to see your references, but you will be able to see if your referee has submitted a recommendation or not. **Please note that you will not be able to submit your application until two references have been provided.** You are advised to notify your referees in advance to ensure they can submit their references before the application deadline.

What if my referees fail to submit a reference?

If your referee does not respond to the invitation to provide a reference, you should add another referee instead. Please note that you will not be notified if a referee declines the invitation to submit a reference. You will be able to monitor the status of your invitations using the "View Referee Form Status" button on the application form itself.

Why has my referee not received any instructions on how to provide my reference?

Please ask your referee to check that there are no missing emails in their 'spam' folder. If the emails cannot be located, please email: norma-support@novo.dk.

Are my professional qualifications also of importance for the evaluation of the application?

Yes, if your previous professional qualifications are within a relevant topic.

How can I find out more about the research topics offered by the PhD programme?

We recommend that you look at [the programme website](#), and follow the links to potential supervisors' webpages. Note that the PhD project is only decided upon after the applicant joins the PhD programme, following discussion with the supervisor.

Should I contact a potential PhD supervisor prior to applying for the programme?

It is not necessary to contact potential supervisors before the interviews. You will have the opportunity to meet 2-4 supervisors relevant to your interests during the interviews. At the beginning of the pre-doctoral year, you will also complete three short lab rotation projects to facilitate a good student-supervisor match.

Are the start dates flexible?

No, you must start on the programme start date (September 1, 2021). You also must be able to attend the full curriculum during the first year. It is not possible to skip the first year, and it is unlikely that you will complete the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme in less than four years.

Can I have an extension / submit my application or references after the deadline?

The call will close on 12 January 2021 at 14.00 CET. Applications or references submitted after this deadline will unfortunately not be considered. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to ensure that they submit their application in due time.

Is there an age limit?

No.

Can I apply for more than one research centre at the same time?

When applying for the programme, you also apply for a specific research centre. However, you will be able to indicate in your application (under the motivation text box) if you are interested in other research centres as well. It is also possible to submit separate applications to more than one research centre in the same call.

What is the salary, and is it sufficient to pay rent in Copenhagen?

We cannot state an exact salary, since it is calculated on an individual basis according to experience. However, Danish universities publish approximate PhD student and research assistant salaries. You can visit the links

from the programme [website](#) to find out more. The salary is sufficient to pay rent and live comfortably in Copenhagen.

Is it difficult to find a place to live when moving to Copenhagen?

We help students to find [accommodation](#) for their first year.

November 2020