

# Programme Information

## EINSTEIN GUEST RESEARCHER TO FOSTER ACADEMIC FREEDOM



### I. OBJECTIVE

The Einstein Foundation's Guest Researcher programme fosters academic freedom by offering persecuted researchers the opportunity to work in Berlin for up to two years. The programme is aimed at researchers from conflict zones who are personally at risk. It also offers researchers experiencing specific or subtle restrictions in their work the chance to conduct their research in Berlin. This strengthens Berlin's image as a tolerant and open city where researchers can work unhindered.

The programmes are future-oriented and cannot offer candidates permanent employment or tenure in Germany; the idea is for candidates to be integrated into a safe and productive research environment in Berlin and to be given the chance to develop their potential and advance their scientific qualifications, with the possibility of being assimilated into Germany's science system in the future.

### II. ELIGIBILITY

Applications can be submitted by Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, and Charité – Universitätsmedizin.

Please note that applications cannot be submitted independently by eligible researchers. Applications will only be considered for funding if the criteria listed below are met and a research unit or professor at one of the above institutions acts as host.

### III. FUNDING

The Einstein Foundation fosters academic freedom by funding Einstein Guest Researchers. There are two funding tracks:

- a) "Immediate support" and
- b) "Advanced support".

To be considered eligible for funding, researchers must hold a terminal degree in their field of research (PhD or above). Both tracks aim to see candidates join an existing research project, either to take up fresh research or continue their previous research (depending on whether they can be matched with a suitable research project). Said research project must be affiliated with a suitable research group, an institute, or a chair at one of the Berlin universities or Charité – Universitätsmedizin.

Candidates are expected to specify the threats or restrictions they are exposed to. Preference will be given to candidates who are able to provide objective proof of these threats (such as a political crisis in their country of origin) or documentation from an independent institution (e.g. asylum application, Scholars at Risk). The institution applying for funding may seek independent input to assess the severity of the threats or restrictions. The application must include a letter of support from the host institution, host research project lead, or host researcher. This letter shall include a profile of the host researcher's or host research unit's activities and elaborate on

- the specific support they will be providing to the candidate,
- how the candidate's research aligns with their own activities, and
- the mutual benefit that both sides will derive from their collaboration, if applicable.

Citizens from EU member states, Norway and Switzerland, as well as non-mobile foreign students ("Bildungsinländer:innen")<sup>1</sup> and German citizens are not eligible for funding.

### III.a) "Immediate support"

#### *Eligible candidates*

This track provides funding for researchers holding a terminal degree in their field of research (PhD or above) who are abroad at the time of application.

#### *FUNDING*

Funding for the researcher can be requested either in the form of a scholarship of up to €2,100 per month, depending on the academic career stage of the individual and the host university's regulations, with no funding provided for additional costs.

In addition, expenses of up to €5,000 for the entire funding period can be requested (for language courses,<sup>2</sup> professional development, and publications only).

#### *FUNDING PERIOD*

The maximum funding period is twelve months. While candidates who have secured "Immediate support" funding are eligible to apply for the "Advanced support" track, the Einstein Foundation encourages them to also consider other funding options or positions.

### III.b) "Advanced support"

#### *Eligible candidates*

This track provides funding above all for researchers holding a terminal degree in their field of research (PhD or above) who are already based in Germany and wish to launch their own pioneering research project at one of the Berlin universities or Charité – Universitätsmedizin in an environment that supports their assimilation into Germany's science system.

Applications can be submitted for international researchers who have not yet spent more than four years in a safe third country.

This track also allows applications for follow-up funding for candidates who have already received or are currently receiving support through the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, as long as the four-year limit in a safe research environment has not been exceeded.

This track provides funding for researchers who, due to their training and career in their country of origin, only have (very) limited prospects of securing employment in a research or research-oriented institution in Germany. The submission should outline the potential long-term opportunities made possible through the Einstein Foundation's funding.

#### *FUNDING*

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<sup>1</sup> "Bildungsinländer:innen" are foreign nationals studying at German higher education institutions who have obtained their higher education entrance qualifications in Germany or at a German school abroad.

<sup>2</sup> Up to €2,000 in funding can be requested for German courses for the entire funding period. Non-university courses can only be funded if comparable courses are not offered by the host university.

Funding for the researcher can be requested in the form of a salaried position (generally in pay grade TV-L E 13).

Additional project-related funding to cover expenses and a student research assistant position can be requested up to a maximum of €30,000 for the entire funding period.

#### *FUNDING PERIOD*

The maximum funding period is two years. It is not possible to apply for an extension.

#### **IV. APPLICATION PROCESS**

For both funding tracks, candidates will need a commitment of support (academic supervision, office and/or lab space, IT and administrative support) from a potential host/mentor at one of the eligible universities in the first instance. After securing support from a host/mentor, they may then contact the relevant individuals in the university research departments for support with the application.

Proposals must be submitted in **English** using the application forms provided online by the Einstein Foundation. As well as justifying the choice of the proposed candidate, the application must include a realistic assessment of

- the candidate's scientific achievements (e.g. a list in the attached CV detailing internationally visible, English-language publications based on their own research, experience in international collaboration, etc.)
- their integration potential (how well their expertise aligns with the focus of the institution submitting the application, their command of English or other relevant languages), and
- their career outlook.

For the "Advanced support" track, stricter requirements apply concerning the outline and proposed timeline for the independent research project they plan to launch. In view of the shorter funding period for the "Immediate support" track, candidates may, for instance, join or be assigned to an existing project at their host institution or host's research unit.

#### **V. ACCESS TO FUNDING**

Grants from the Foundation are disbursed through the budget of the host university or Charité – Universitätsmedizin as third-party funding.

#### **Contact:**

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