

# Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS)



AIAS-COFUND fellowships 2014

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS



# Content

1	About Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS).....	3
2	Types and duration of fellowships in this call.....	3
2.1	Incoming mobility .....	4
2.2	Reintegration.....	4
3	AIAS-COFUND fellowships 2014 .....	4
3.1	Who can apply .....	4
3.2	When and how to apply.....	5
3.3	Application deadline.....	5
3.4	Application requirements .....	5
3.4.1	Desired start date.....	5
3.4.2	Mobility statement .....	5
3.4.3	Personal background.....	6
3.4.4	Area of research .....	6
3.4.5	Abstract.....	6
3.4.6	Project description / Research plan.....	7
3.4.7	An account of why you would like to carry out your research work within the AIAS framework ....	7
3.4.8	Collaborations or connections at Aarhus University .....	7
3.4.9	Suggestions of 5 peer reviewers by the applicant.....	7
3.4.10	CV .....	7
3.4.11	PhD diploma .....	8
3.4.12	List of publications.....	8
3.4.13	Budget.....	8
3.5	Assessment criteria .....	8
3.6	Career breaks.....	10
3.7	E-application system.....	10
3.8	Application process and evaluation .....	11
3.8.1	Timeline .....	11
3.8.2	Processing procedures.....	11
3.8.3	Rebuttal opportunities.....	12
4	Working at AIAS and in Denmark.....	12
4.1	Benefits and services at AIAS.....	12
4.2	General employment conditions in Denmark.....	12
4.3	Life in Aarhus .....	13
5	Sources of help and additional information .....	13

# GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS



## AARHUS INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES (AIAS)

### 1 About Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS)

The mission of Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) is to advance highest quality research by attracting talented, highly qualified fellows worldwide and within all disciplines. AIAS strives to provide the fellows with ideal opportunities to further develop their research, and encourage the fellows' participation in various kinds of collaboration with researchers, research groups and advanced students at Aarhus University (AU). The goals for AIAS are ambitious and reflect the increasingly influential position of AU as a world-class research university. Most importantly, AIAS reflects the commitment of AU to support research talent and realise the promise inherent in the research endeavour. The AIAS includes a comprehensive spectrum of disciplines with a view to foster cutting edge research results.

At AIAS, international researchers are both collaborating and sharing knowledge with local researchers of their own discipline, and at the same time they are a part of a multidisciplinary and international environment of excellence. This provides the individual fellow with a unique opportunity to focus fully on deepening his/her research, while also collaborating with researchers with different research perspectives.

### 2 Types and duration of fellowships in this call

The AIAS-COFUND (Marie Curie) fellowship programme is co-funded by Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) and the European Commission (FP7 Marie Curie Actions). The programme provides research opportunities for the most talented researchers from around the world. The goal of the AIAS-COFUND fellowship is to generate excellence in research by attracting the most talented researchers worldwide and across all research disciplines. Fellows can choose their research topic freely within all academic disciplines.

The programme encompasses two types of fellowships:

- **Junior fellows:** Researchers with at least two years of experience after completion of PhD (up to 19 fellowships available)
- **Senior fellows:** Researchers with 10+ years of postdoctoral research experience (up to 6 fellowships available).

**AIAS** is an independent institute set up by Aarhus University. Aarhus University is a modern European university with more than 44,500 students and 12,000 employees. The university is dedicated to research, talent development, knowledge exchange and education in all fields – from the humanities to business and social sciences, and from science and technology to medicine. Aarhus University has an annual budget of over USD 1 billion.

In recent years, Aarhus University has been advancing in the most important international rankings. Aarhus University has produced two Nobel Prize Laureates in the past fifteen years and is currently ranked in the worldwide top 100 by leading university rankings.

Transnational mobility among researchers optimizes the circulation of, the access to and the transfer of scientific knowledge that will strengthen the skills of the individual researcher. The AIAS-COFUND programme contributes with approximately 70 fellowships over a period of 5 years. In this first call up to a total of 25 fellowships are available. There will be up to 19 fellowships available commencing on 1 October 2014, and up to 6 fellowships available commencing on 1 February 2015.

It is a long-term aim of the programme that a fellowship will result in a profound research collaboration and knowledge exchange between research groups in Denmark and the AIAS-COFUND fellows. It is an ambition that this collaboration will continue after the termination of a fellowship and may also open for collaborations between Aarhus University and the fellow's future employer. AIAS fellows are expected to be physically situated in AIAS' buildings on the Aarhus University campus, to participate in AIAS programmes and events, and to organize academic activities such as workshops, public talks or speakers' series in order to contribute to the intellectual life at the Institute and at Aarhus University.

The duration of a fellowship varies from 6 up to 36 months. Duration for junior fellowships is preferably 24 months, however, it is negotiable (within the window) to suit the needs and wishes of the fellows, in terms of what is suitable and realistic, with regards to the research proposal. The duration of a fellowship must be justified in the proposal, and its appropriateness will be assessed, when the applications are evaluated.

## **2.1 Incoming mobility**

The programme is open for both incoming mobility and reintegration. Incoming fellowships are for non-residents of Denmark. The target group is experienced researchers from all countries. The applicant shall demonstrate mobility and must therefore at the time of the deadline for submission of proposals not have resided or carried out his/her main activity (work, studies etc.) in Denmark for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

## **2.2 Reintegration**

Reintegration fellowships are for nationals from EU member states and EU associated countries who have carried out research for at least three years in a country outside the European Union, and who wish to return to Denmark in order to become established in a longer-term career after a period of transnational mobility. At the time of the deadline for submission of proposals, applicants shall not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies etc.) in Denmark for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

## **3 AIAS-COFUND fellowships 2014**

### **3.1 Who can apply**

Apart from the mobility rule, all criteria in the evaluation process (see section 3.5) are valid for both the integration and the reintegration fellowship scheme. The bottom-up approach will be

respected, i.e. within the scope of AIAS, all disciplines with free choice of research topics are eligible. The target group of the programme is talented researchers with at least two years of fulltime experience after completion of their PhD.

### **3.2 When and how to apply**

The research proposal must be submitted via the AU electronic application system, using [www.efond.dk/aias](http://www.efond.dk/aias) and must cover the sections described below. Information about the electronic application system can be found in section 3.7.

### **3.3 Application deadline**

Friday, 21 March 2014 at 12.00 (noon) CEST. See detailed timeline in section 3.8.1.

### **3.4 Application requirements**

Below is an overview of the content needed for the application (arranged in the same way as the application system):

- Name, title and contact information
- Year of completed PhD
- Desired start date
- Mobility statement
- Personal background
- Area of research
- Project abstract and description
- References to the project description
- Argumentation for AIAS
- Collaborations or connections at Aarhus University
- Suggestion for peer reviewers incl. contact information
- Upload of figures to the project description (if any)
- Upload of CV, PhD diploma, List of publications and budget

Please make sure that all the requested information is included in the application, and that the requested files are uploaded before submitting the application. If the requirements are not met, the application can be rejected.

#### **3.4.1 Desired start date**

In this first call up to a total of 25 fellowships are available. There will be up to 19 fellowships available commencing on 1 October 2014, and up to 6 fellowships available commencing on 1 February 2015. There is no guarantee that the desired start date can be met.

#### **3.4.2 Mobility statement**

Indicate the period(s) and the country/countries in which you have legally resided and/or had your main activity (work, studies etc.) during the last 5 years up until the deadline for the submission of the proposal. The 5 years prior to the deadline must be covered. Wrong or missing information may cause your proposal to be ineligible. Any additional information you wish to make known to the evaluators should be included in the CV.

### 3.4.3 Personal background

A brief outline of your personal background, professional life achievements and expectations to the future must be given. Not a listing of previous jobs and education as this is done in the standard CV, which is to be uploaded in step 3.

### 3.4.4 Area of research

Candidates can submit a research project in the listed scientific areas, grouped in three main areas corresponding to the three European Research Council (ERC) research domains. The three main areas are:

1. Physical Sciences and Engineering
2. Life Sciences
3. Social Sciences and Humanities

Next you will have to select **one** scientific sub area. The sub areas are:

- Mathematics
- Physics
- Chemical Sciences
- Architecture and Civil Engineering
- Industrial Engineering
- Information Engineering
- Earth Sciences
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Medical Sciences
- Biology
- Agronomical Sciences and Veterinary Medicine
- Psychology
- Philology, Literature, Art and Ancient Sciences
- History, Philosophy and Pedagogical Sciences
- Juridical Sciences
- Economical Sciences and Statistics
- Social and Political Sciences

A secondary sub area is only to be selected if the sub area above does not cover the scientific area in this application.

### 3.4.5 Abstract

The abstract (max. 2,000 characters incl. blanks) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the proposal, how they will be achieved, and their relevance. This summary will be used as the short description of the proposal in the evaluation process and in communications with the evaluation committees and other interested parties. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information. Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters.

Please notice that the electronic application system calculates characters differently than Microsoft Word; e.g. line breaks counts for more than one character. In order to counteract this, each text box allows for 5% more than the character limit in each section. When all boxes “turn green”, you can submit the application.

### **3.4.6 Project description / Research plan**

An academic project description (max. 12,500 characters incl. blanks, excl. list of references) describing the specific research area that you wish to pursue at the Institute, including justification of fellowship duration/and or project timeline. See section 3.5 for the general assessment criteria. The electronic application system will only allow text in the text box. Figures relating to the project description must be uploaded in step 3 as jpeg-files. Please use line breaks to organize your project description, since all formatting (bold and italic font) will be reset in the text box. Before applying, the applicant is welcome to seek an agreement letter of an AU academic (host researcher) who may also act as a host and mentor to the applicant, if granted a fellowship. The host researcher can inform the applicant whether the appropriate facilities for the research project are available at the university. Seeking the agreement of an AU host researcher before applying is not a requirement, but should be considered a possibility and will not be considered as any form of pre-selection. Therefore, in order to avoid the risk of the host letter compromising transparency amongst applicants, it will thus not be a part of the evaluation. If you already have established contact, this can be described in the application. See section 3.4.8.

### **3.4.7 An account of why you would like to carry out your research work within the AIAS framework**

An account of why you would like to carry out your research work within the AIAS framework (max. 5,000 characters incl. blanks). The account should include your visions and ideas on how you expect to actively add to the creation of the social and academic environment of AIAS.

### **3.4.8 Collaborations or connections at Aarhus University**

Please state if connections to AU research environments have already been established and describe plans for cooperation and contact information of the collaborator. Letters of recommendations for such collaborations can be uploaded in step 3 in the application system as pdf-files.

### **3.4.9 Suggestions of 5 peer reviewers by the applicant**

To review the application, contact information of each reviewer (Name, address, email address and phone number) should be included. An evaluator must be at least at the level of an associate professor.

The applicants will have to declare that there is no conflict of interest between the applicant and the peers whom the applicant are invited to suggest as potential reviewers. The applicant will also have to declare that there is no conflict of interest between the applicant and any of the members of the Quality Assurance group (henceforth QA group) and any of the members of the selection committee (applicant declaring that she/he has had no research collaborations or co-published any papers with the suggested reviewers, any of the selection committee members and any members of the QA group within the past 10 years prior to the deadline of the call). The members of the QA group and the Selection Committee will be announced here: <http://aias.au.dk/aias-fellowships/aias-cofund-fellowships/>.

### **3.4.10 CV**

The CV should be a maximum of 5 pages in one pdf-file to be uploaded in step 3 in the electronic application system. The CV must describe your personal background, education and career until now. In the evaluation of scientific achievements both already achieved results and future potential will be evaluated – the latter is particularly the case for junior fellows.

### 3.4.11 PhD diploma

Your PhD diploma must be uploaded as an attached file in step 3 in the electronic application system as a pdf- or jpeg-file.

### 3.4.12 List of publications

A maximum of 5 pages in one pdf-file to be uploaded in step 3 in the electronic application system.

### 3.4.13 Budget

Please use the Excel template found at <http://aias.au.dk/aias-fellowships/aias-cofund-fellowships/>. Upload the budget as an Excel file or pdf-file in the application system in step 3.

The following types of research related expenses will be covered:

- Research travels, i.e. travelling activity related to the part of the project which is carried out at AIAS, e.g.: the participation in research-related seminars, conferences etc.
- Financial aid for specific technical assistance needed for the carrying out of the research project may be given.
- Expenses for the arrangement of scholarly events, e.g.: workshops, seminars and symposiums at the Institute.
- Expenses for extraordinary heavy running costs, e.g.: laboratory facilities, large computer/server capacity etc.

The following are **already included** in a fellowship and will not have to be justified in the budget:

- Competitive salaries equivalent to the Danish wage levels for the period of time during which fellows are staying at the Institute. Salaries will be negotiated when the grant is awarded.
- The journey to and from Aarhus (economy class) for fellows, and for the accompanying family (only one return travel), if any.
- Expenses related to visa and work permit applications.
- Expenses for ordinary running costs (standard computer, office supplies, research materials etc.).
- General clerical assistance provided by the AIAS administrative staff.

The following types of expenses will **not** be covered:

- Salary expenses for PhD students and postdocs.
- Secretarial and PA assistance.
- Private housing costs.
- Expenses related to ordinary Danish costs of living.
- Other expenses related to accompanying family.

## 3.5 Assessment criteria

The primary assessment criteria are research excellence, training and career development. The single most important goal of the evaluation process is to obtain the most talented and most



promising group of fellows possible, and to provide them with the best training and career development opportunities at AIAS.

The following will be evaluated:

**1. Relevance and expected impact of the proposed research (weighting 20%):**

- a. Relevance of the proposed work to the scope of the call
- b. Motivation and suitability relating to the frames at AIAS
- c. Broader impact (scientific, knowledge creation, socio-economic)
- d. Incremental vs. transformative gains
- e. Associated risks
- f. Requested resources
  - i. Budget
  - ii. Staff effort
  - iii. Access to infrastructure
  - iv. Equipment and consumables
  - v. Travel
  - vi. Networking and dissemination
- g. Ethical issues: compliance with standard norms and ethical practices when dealing with safety and security, use of animals and human subjects, environment, embargos and sanctions
- h. Gender balance

**2. Scientific quality of the proposal (weighting 35%):**

- a. Scientific/intellectual merits of the proposed research: clear, convincing and compelling
- b. Thoroughness: definition of the problem and proposed solutions, review of state of the art
- c. Novelty and originality
  - i. Conventionality
  - ii. Potential for the creation of new knowledge, exciting new ideas and approaches
  - iii. Use of novel technologies/methodologies
  - iv. Innovative application of existing methodologies/technologies in new areas
  - v. Potential for the creation of new fundamental questions and new directions for research
  - vi. Feasibility: scientific, technological, access to infrastructure, recruitment, project timeline, management plan and deliverables, associated risks
  - vii. Appropriateness of the research methods, infrastructures, equipment and fieldwork

**3. Quality of the applicant (weighting 35%):**

- a. Academic qualifications and achievements in relation to their stage of career
- b. Research experience and level of independence
- c. Demonstrated expertise of the applicant(s) in similar projects
- d. Applicants' scientific networks and ability to successfully disseminate research findings, i.e. knowledge transfer activities

- e. Publication track record – 5 most relevant articles for the fellowship application
- f. Bibliometric indices
- g. Career breaks, i.e. has the applicant had any career break after obtaining her/his PhD due to e.g. maternity, paternity or parental leave, or compulsory military service
- h. Potentials

#### 4. Research environment (weighting 10%):

- a. Availability and accessibility of personnel, facilities and infrastructures
- b. Suitability of the environment to conduct the proposed research
- c. Availability of other necessary resources
- d. Mobility and career development aspects

### 3.6 Career breaks

Career breaks will be taken into account, when evaluating the academic quality of the applicant. Attention will be paid to individual career paths and circumstances caused by career interruptions and changes, e.g. maternity/paternity/parental/sick leave and compulsory military service or inter-sectoral and non-academic mobility such as working for industry with regards to the applicant's publication track record and involvement in research projects.

For applicants who have been on maternity, paternity, parental or sick leave after obtaining their PhD, the external individual reviewers and the selection committee will allow for an extended period of time since the degree was obtained when determining whether the fellow is categorized as a junior or senior fellow. The extended period is calculated by multiplying the actual number of months on leave by factor 1.5. As for career breaks due to e.g. military service, the extended period is calculated by multiplying the actual number of months in the military by factor 1.

This procedure is to ensure that the evaluation of applicants is gender fair. The exact period of leave and type of leave must be stated in the applicant's CV.

### 3.7 E-application system

- › Go to the website: [www.efond.dk/aiaa](http://www.efond.dk/aiaa)
- › Choose “**Application form, Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies**”
- › Create an account using your email address and a personal password. It is important that you use a valid email address, since all further correspondence will be communicated to this address.
- › Once you have registered, the application can be edited until submission.
- › Each text box in the application form can hold a limited number of characters (as described in the application requirements (section 3.4), but the characters are not calculated the same way as in Microsoft Word. Hence the boxes allow for 5% extra. If the limit of characters is exceeded, a warning comes up and the application cannot be sent.

- › All steps must be filled in and files uploaded (CV, PhD diploma, list of publications, budget and recommendations, if any) before submitting the application. After submission the application can no longer be edited, and it is only possible to view the application.
- › The application system (Efond) is available in any browser and even on tablets such as iPhone and iPads.

## **3.8 Application process and evaluation**

### **3.8.1 Timeline**

- Opening of call: Tuesday, 28 January 2014.
- Deadline for applications: Friday, 21 March 2014 at 12.00 (noon) CEST.
- Evaluation period: March-May 2014.
- Applicants will receive answers: June 2014.
- Fellowship periods will commence: 1 October 2014 (up to 19 fellowships) or 1 February 2015 (up to 6 fellowships).

### **3.8.2 Processing procedures**

Immediately after the deadline for applications, the applications will be subject to an eligibility screening by the AIAS administration team. The eligibility screening will be carried out in a strict and consistent manner, and the screening is final with no possibility of resubmission in the current call.

Applicants will be informed after each step of the application procedure: successful submission of application, eligibility check and evaluation/selection. The evaluation and selection process is based on an open, fair and transparent competition between the applicants.

Three different bodies will be involved in the evaluation and selection process:

- Three individual reviewers in remote evaluation
- The selection committee
- The QA group

The three external individual reviewers are selected from the suggested peers by the applicant, from an existing AU database of reviewers and from the European databases of evaluators. The three reviewers shall be distinguished researchers within the specific research area of the application in question. Reviewers must be at least at associate professor level with publication lists in peer-reviewed journals, and must be external to AU with at least one reviewer being non-Danish.

The identity of the external individual reviewers will not be disclosed to the applicants. The disclosure of the identity of the applicants to the external individual reviewers and the selection committee is a necessity in order to base the evaluation of the applicants on the chosen selection criteria in particular with regards to the quality of the applicant, and the applicant's potential for further progress. The identity of the members of the selection committee is public, however, the applicant shall not seek contact to members of the AIAS-COFUND Selection committee until final selection has been published.

### **3.8.3 Rebuttal opportunities**

The assessments and scores provided by the external individual reviewers will be made available to the applicants immediately after the reviewers have finalized their review. If an applicant finds that the administrative procedure described for applications was not followed, the applicant has the opportunity of filing a rebuttal to the AIAS administration team. A rebuttal must be done in writing, and can be based on administrative grounds with regards to procedural errors only. Hence, a rebuttal cannot be based on the scientific evaluation remarks.

A rebuttal is only to be filed once a decision has been made as to which applicants will be offered a fellowship. The AIAS administration team will forward any rebuttal to the selection committee and the QA group. If the QA group agrees with the applicant that the administrative processes have not been followed and hence that the rebuttal is justified, the applicant will be offered to have her/his proposal re-evaluated without the applicant having to wait for the next call.

## **4 Working at AIAS and in Denmark**

### **4.1 Benefits and services at AIAS**

The AIAS-COFUND fellows will be employed at the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, and will receive an employment contract. Foreign employees are entitled to social security benefits in Denmark. The employment contract will specify the most important terms and conditions of employment such as salary, income-based contribution to a pension fund, holiday allowance, working hours, etc.

The AIAS fellows can expect extensive assistance with practical and logistical matters that may arise from pre-arrival to post-departure. AIAS has dedicated relocation employees who, in collaboration with the International Centre at Aarhus University, will be of assistance in solving matters regarding visa applications, relocation, accommodation, language courses, spouse support, childcare options, finding schools for accompanying children, etc.

Aarhus University has an International Centre with 30+ employees who are dedicated to help international staff members and students with practical and logistical matters that may arise from pre-arrival to post-departure. The International Centre has been established to help international staff members and students moving to or living in Denmark with matters relating to their settling in at the University and in Aarhus.

### **4.2 General employment conditions in Denmark**

- 37 hour work week
- 5 (+ 1) weeks paid holiday annually
- Salary paid during illness
- If you have a sick child, you are entitled to stay at home with your child under the age of 18 on the first two days of illness with full salary

The Danish working conditions also applying to the AIAS-COFUND fellows will allow for both female and male researchers to combine family and work, children and career. In Denmark, employment conditions and wages are regulated through collective agreements negotiated by

trade unions and employers' organizations. However, vacation, equal opportunities and health and safety are all areas regulated by law.

Foreign employees are covered by the same rules and regulations as Danish employees, and are therefore covered by the Danish social security system and entitled to social security benefits. Social security in Denmark is tax-funded, i.e. the fellows will not pay health insurance contributions or long-term healthcare insurance. Danish taxes are high. However, more attractive and special taxation rules (known as "the researcher taxation rule") are applicable to most foreign researchers. The HR department at Aarhus University and the Danish tax authorities will be able to advise foreign researchers whether or not they qualify for the special tax rate for foreign researchers.

### 4.3 Life in Aarhus

Aarhus was founded over 1,000 years ago as a Viking settlement at the mouth of a river. The city first began developing c. 1900, when industrial growth attracted rural populations. The population of Aarhus has almost doubled since 1935 and is still growing, although rather more slowly than in recent decades.

Photo of the campus area (the yellow buildings) and part of the city, 2005. Photo: Erik W. Olsson



Aarhus is the second-largest city in Denmark situated by the sea in the heart of Jutland. The Municipality of Aarhus covers approximately 300,000 inhabitants with an additional 1,200,000 people living in the surrounding region of East Jutland, making it the second-largest region in Denmark. Aarhus is a "young" city due to the relatively large population of younger inhabitants. This naturally follows

the location of many educational institutions and schools where young people from outlying districts move into the city to study. However, many of them move away once their studies are completed. Read more about the city of Aarhus at: <http://aarhus.dk/english.asp>

More information about Denmark can be found on [www.workindenmark.dk](http://www.workindenmark.dk) - a public organization that offers practical information and general advice on all issues related to work in Denmark.

## 5 Sources of help and additional information

For additional information regarding the application system, process or the AIAS programme in general, please feel welcome to contact:

**Tove Østergaard Le, [TOE@adm.au.dk](mailto:TOE@adm.au.dk)**

**or by telephone: +45 21 62 49 21.**

For further information about AIAS, please visit: <http://aias.au.dk>

For further information about the SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME, FP7 Marie Curie Actions – People, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>.