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**Deliverable No. 4.2**

# Recruitment Guidelines

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# SUMMARY

This deliverable contains as an Annex the Recruitment Guidelines for the NeuroNanotech project these guidelines are available to download from the project website (see below) and were made public at the call's launch (20th February 2025).

https://neuronanotech.eu/apply-now/download-area/

# ANNEX 1: CALL RECRUITMENT GUIDELINES

# neuro nanotech

neuroscience · nanoscience

# Guide for applicants

February 2025

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EXCELENCIA SEVERO OCHOA

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# 1. About NeuroNanotech doctoral network

NeuroNanotech is a doctoral network funded by the European Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) that will train eleven researchers to tackle one of the major challenges in Europe's ageing population - neurological diseases.

NeuroNanotech brings together experts in nanotechnology, device engineering, neuroscience and clinical neurology. The individual research projects are highly interconnected, ensuring interdisciplinary training.

Researchers will benefit from training in advanced research and relevant complementary skills, imparted by an international and intersectoral consortium of research institutes, universities, companies, hospitals and social organisations from 9 different countries.

The network will provide researchers a unique environment focused on innovation and collaboration, with a view to commercial applications of the research results. This framework will open researchers avenues in both academia and health-related industry.

# 2. Call for applications

The call for applications opens on the date it is published and closes on **30th April 2025 at 17:00 (CET).**

11 MSCA fellowships will be offered on a full-time employment contract for 3 years (36 months) to undertake a PhD project. A full description of the PhD projects on offer is published on the NeuroNanotech website. Applicants are able to freely choose a PhD project and associated supervisor that fits their individual research interest. Candidates may apply for a maximum of three project positions.

Fellows need to comply with the MSCA eligibility criteria in order to be able to apply for this call, please see the section below on the eligibility criteria for candidates.

Recruited fellows are expected to start their fellowship in September 2025.

# 3. Eligibility criteria

Researchers of **any nationality** are eligible to apply. Candidates must comply with the following eligibility criteria:

- **Mobility requirements:** not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting organisation for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately **before the recruitment date** (unless as part of a compulsory national service or a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention)

- **Degree certificates:** Candidates must have completed the studies that lead to an official university degree that gives access to doctoral studies according to host organisation and national rules.

- **Research experience:** Candidates must be doctoral candidates, i.e. not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of recruitment.

Candidates must provide their Degree Certificates giving access to doctoral studies with their applications and the award of the fellowship will be contingent to the successful enrolment in a doctoral programme in at least 1 EU Member State/Associated Country.

Evidence to verify other eligibility and the applicable allowances will be requested before recruitment is concluded.

At the time of application, candidates must ensure to also follow any additional application procedures that may be required by the host organisation and in accordance with applicable national rules.

Candidates may apply for a maximum of three project positions.

# 4. Fellowship conditions

NeuroNanotech MSCA fellows will be hired on a full-time standard employment contract for the maximum duration of 3 years (36 months) to undertake their PhD research project and complying with the national legislation for the performance of doctoral studies.

Fellows will directly receive a **living allowance** (covering salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs included in the remuneration) and a **mobility allowance** (mobility costs to take up the position).

Where eligible, a **family allowance**, provided for married researchers, (or status equivalent to marriage) or researchers with dependent children, will be made available.

The host organisation will manage other **research and travel costs** available for the fellows to cover costs directly related with the development of the projects and necessary for the successful execution and travel costs associated with the researchers training and networking, and to cover relevant expenses in secondments.

Researchers with disabilities are supported and an **MSCA Special Needs Allowance** will be applied for to cover any additional costs that researchers with disabilities face due to the increased costs of their mobility.

*Courtesy of UAM*

# 5. Training offer

NeuroNanotech offers researchers the opportunity to develop **truly interdisciplinary** PhD research projects that combine different disciplines and translational research, while gaining **international** and **inter-sectoral training** experience.

Fellows will follow a personalised **career development programme** that includes research and transferable skills training, mentoring, networking and secondment opportunities.

NeuroNanotech will have access to a wide network of collaborators and partner organisations to develop and pursue their research interests and implement their career plan. A **compulsory secondment** will be supported at a partner organisation relevant to the project and the researcher's career, either in an academic or a

non-academic setting. These will have a duration between 3- to 8 months (completed in one or several stays, and within the duration of the PhD project) according to the project requirements, new skills or technical needs.

The training programme includes 7 **network-wide training events** (3-day long each) and hands-on workshops and activities throughout the duration of the programme. These will allow fellows to improve their transferable skills and knowledge on research-related topics, such as open science, data management, research integrity and ethics, research funding, etc. Fellows will have the opportunity to coordinate and participate in communication and outreach activities and to gain entrepreneurial experience.

# 6. Application process

The call opens for applications from the date it is published and closes on **30th April 2025 at 17:00 (CET).**

Candidates must register in the NeuroNanotech website and download the Application Form (CV and Motivation Statement templates) and the Research Supervisor Support Form. Only applications that comply with this format will be considered.

Applicants should get in touch with the relevant PhD project supervisor and submit a signed Research Supervisor Support Form. This document confirms that the applicant meets the required background and skills for the proposed research and that the relevant PhD project supervisor is willing to host them should they be selected. It is the applicant's responsibility to secure this endorsement before submitting their application. Applicants should also discuss and follow with the research supervisor any additional application steps and background/eligibility checks that may be required by the relevant host organisation.

Once they are registered and have completed the templates, applicants must fill in an Online Form and upload the files to the website system (Application, Research Supervisor Support Form and two Reference Letters).

First, candidates will be asked to provide **Personal Information**, required fields are marked with *.

- Name(s)*
- Surname(s)*
- E-mail*
- Telephone Number

Then, they will be asked to provide information about their **Academic Records:** upload evidence of Degree Certificates and answer questions about eligibility criteria:

- Current Affiliation*
- Have you spent more than 12 months in the host country during the last 36 months?*
- Have you completed the studies that lead to an official University degree that gives access to doctoral studies* (Please see the eligibility criteria section)
- University degree giving access to PhD (Title)*
- University degree giving access to PhD (Date of award)*

Finally, candidates must complete their **Application**, by filling in the following fields and uploading the mandatory files:

- Have you contacted with research supervisor?*
- Title of the selected PhD project*
- Application Form (PDF file, 2MB max. file size)*
- Research Supervisor Support Form (PDF file, 2MB max. file size)*
- Degree Certificates: University degrees giving access to doctoral studies (Please include Bachelor's and Master's degrees, or equivalent document/s, in one PDF file, 2MB max. file size) *
- Two Reference Letters (PDF file, 2MB max. file size)*

Please note that the following documents must be prepared in advance before uploading them:

- **Application Form** (narrative Curriculum Vitae and Motivation Statement templates – one PDF file, 2MB max. file size). Please download the Application Form template, only CVs that conform to this template will be evaluated.
- **Research Supervisor Support Form** (PDF file, 2MB max. file size). Please download the Research Supervisor Support Form.
- **Two Reference Letters** (one PDF file, 2MB max. file size). It will be taken into account the content of the reference letters in relation to the candidate application and profile of the referee.

Additionally, candidates will be asked to complete an **Equal Opportunities** section, with the following fields:

- Gender
- Nationality*
- Country of residence*
- Do you have any caring responsibilities?
- Do you regard yourself in any way disabled?

*Please note: The information in this section is collected for statistical purposes and to ensure equal opportunities.*

A confirmation email will be received when applications are successfully sent.

# 7. Selection process and evaluation criteria

The recruitment and selection process follows Open, Transparent and Merit based Recruitment (OTM-R) practices in accordance to the European Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

In agreement with CoARA principles, a broad range of achievements and skills will be considered and evaluated.

## Phase 1 - **Review of applications**

The recruitment process will be carried out by the selection committee ensuring an open, transparent and merit-based process.

Eligibility checking – the NeuroNanotech's management team will receive all applications and will check for completeness and eligibility, using the eligibility statements and cross-checking the CV. Any misstatement given, as well as incomplete and/or ineligible applications will be discarded at this stage. The results of the eligibility check will be notified to the non-eligible applicants around 2 weeks after the call deadline. Applications who are deemed eligible will receive confirmation that they have passed the eligibility check and whether their application will go out for an in-depth review.

Evaluation- Each application will be evaluated by three expert evaluators (including the primary project supervisor) and will be given a score in accordance with the criteria outlined in the tables below. The overall grade must be greater than a threshold value of 3.5 over 5 in each of candidate´s background, motivation and innovative nature of their proposal and references. The total score of the application will result from the weighted average of the three scores.

The following table specifies the assessment criteria to be considered by evaluators to score each application.

| APPLICATION ASSESSMENT | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND | MOTIVATION STATEMENT | REFERENCES |
| *Criteria* | CV and academic grades of the applicant, including publications, if any, and participation in research projects, complementary training, and other relevant professional experience. | Interest and commitment of the applicant. Expected impact of the fellowship over the applicant's future career. Suitability of the applicant to the chosen doctoral project. | Content of reference letters in relation to the candidate application and profile of the referee. |
| *Weight* | 50% | 30% | 20% |
| *Threshold* | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 |

Applicants will be informed about the outcome by email. For each position, the top 3 ranked candidates and above the overall score of 70% in the application stage, will pass to the next stage of the selection process – the interview.

## Phase 2 - **The Interview**

The interview may be held in person or remotely. During the interview the applicant will be asked to deliver a presentation followed by a set of questions from the interview panel. The interview panel will be composed of a gender-balanced panel of at least 3 members, including the researcher's primary supervisor and an external expert. An expert in equality, diversity and inclusion may oversee the proceedings.

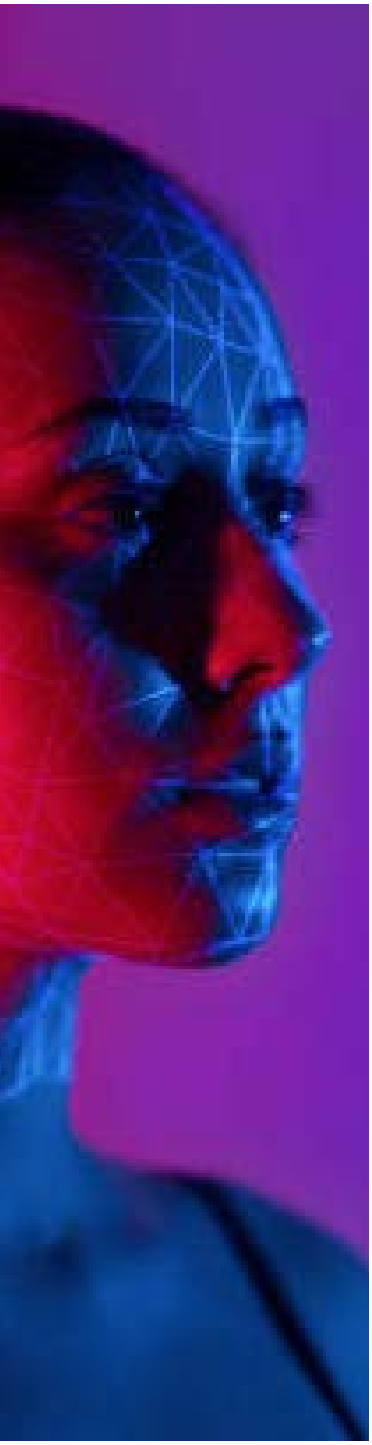
Those applicants who get to the interview stage will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

| INTERVIEW | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | KNOWLEDGE | MOTIVATION | POTENTIAL |
| *Criteria* | · General knowledge and understanding of challenges and opportunities in the research area<br>· Scientific knowledge in the field of the selected project<br>· Suitability of their experience/background to the selected project | · Motivation towards the chosen PhD project<br>· Impact of the fellowship on the candidate's career | · Behavioural attributes and skills including communication and reasoning, integrity, teamwork, proactivity, creativity, adaptability and leadership |
| *Weight* | 40% | 30% | 30% |

The final mark for each application will be comprised of the score from the application and the interview, scoring with equal weighting:

| FINAL SCORE | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Criteria* | APPLICATION | INTERVIEW |
| *Weight* | 50% | 50% |

Within 2 weeks, candidates will be informed by e-mail of their interview outcome, including the final score and overall feedback.



A total of 11 fellowships will be offered to the top ranked candidates, and above the final score threshold of 70%.

Successful candidates must notify the programme coordinator by e-mail within 2 weeks whether or not they accept the offer.

## Phase 3 - **Post-interview**

Upon selection, successful applicants must ensure to follow any additional application and enrolment steps with the host organisation and will receive an offer of an employment contract by the host organisation. Prior to the organisation giving a firm offer of a contract, the NeuroNanotech management team and the host organisation may contact the applicant or their referees to request further documentary evidence to verify their eligibility. Should this check fail, the award may be withdrawn. The award will also be contingent to satisfactory University checks on the applicant's degree giving access to the doctoral studies.

## Phase 4 - **Appointment of fellows**

**Reserve list** - those who score equal to or greater than the threshold but not high enough to be selected will be placed on a reserve list, in order of their score, for the purpose of possible substitution if selected candidates resigns before their incorporation.

**Redress Procedure** - Upon reception of the information with the outcome of the selection process, doctoral candidates may request a redress procedure (during ten working days), if there is any indication that there has been a shortcoming in the evaluation process or eligibility check. The procedure will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts. Information on the redress procedure will be outlined in the information letter sent to applicants.

**Appointments** - It is expected that successful candidates will start the fellowship in September 2025, unless duly justified.

The NeuroNanotech management team (neuronanotech.project@imdea.org) and relevant departments at the host organisation will offer assistance and support on visa and relocating issues to all incoming doctoral candidates.

# 8. Equal opportunities

The NeuroNanotech Network aims for a representative gender balance at all levels, including at supervisory and management level.

The recruitment programme does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion and social or economic condition.

Any research career gaps and/or unconventional paths should be clearly explained in the application so that this can be fairly assessed by the assessed by the evaluators. Candidates with a career break will not be discriminated against and will have equal opportunities.

Researchers with disabilities are supported and an **MSCA Special Needs Allowance** will be applied for to cover any additional costs that researchers with disabilities face due to the increased costs of their mobility.

Doctoral candidates will also be entitled to Long-Term Leave allowance where general and specific eligibility conditions for the living and mobility allowances were fulfilled. The time elapsed during this interruption will not be accounted for against the total time.

# 9. Contact

Please, do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, especially those regarding:

- The functioning of the NeuroNanotech recruitment process
- Benefits and salaries
- PhD projects
- Eligibility and exemptions queries
- How to prepare and send your application
- The selection process
- Equal opportunities and special needs

We will be glad to answer them for you from neuronanotech.project@imdea.org

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neuronanotech.eu

# Guide for applicants


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