Application Manual

FRIAS Senior Fellowship Programme

Application deadline: 18 September 2026, 13:00 CET

universität freiburg FRIAS

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Eligibility Requirements and Application Procedure

To be eligible, candidates must **fulfil all of (1) the formal eligibility criteria** and **(2) the basic academic quality criteria. (3) Applicants must carefully follow all given form requirements and length limits listed in the Application Materials section.**

1. Formal eligibility criteria

- Applicants must hold a completed doctoral degree plus a minimum of eight years of post-doctoral experience.
- Applicants must have at least six months' research or study experience at academic institution(s) in a country different from the country of their first academic degree by the time of application. Short stays, such as holidays, conferences, or summer schools, are not considered.
- Applicants must propose a research project that can be supported at the University of Freiburg (regarding infrastructural, technical, and laboratory requirements). Experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg (including a Letter of Support).
- The research project must not involve topics that are excluded from funding due to ethical issues.
- As FRIAS offers residential fellowships, fieldwork conducted outside Freiburg cannot be funded during the fellowship period (details see FAQ).
- Applications exceeding the word count and page limits (see Application Materials) will not be considered.
- Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

2. Basic academic quality criteria

Minimum requirements for publication record: 10 peer-reviewed publications since 1 January 2020.

The publications can appear in different media, such as books, journals, repositories or websites, and can have different formats. These include monographs (counted as three publications), journal articles, articles on preprint servers, and contributions to anthologies and collections of essays. If available, please also provide a persistent identifier (e.g. DOI/ Digital Object Identifier).

Manuscripts not published before the application deadline, as well as textbooks, reprints, translations, book reviews and editorial publications, will not be taken into consideration. An exception is made for papers that have already been accepted for publication, in which case the editor's confirmation of acceptance must be enclosed.

Details of quantitative metrics, such as impact factors and h-indices, are not required and are not considered as part of the review.

Time off for family, medical reasons or non-academic professional activities will not be counted as part of the relevant period (see FAQ).

The project should not be of local interest only but should have sufficient potential for international transfer.

Application Materials

Candidates apply exclusively via the online application portal. We do not accept applications submitted by other ways of communication. After final submission, applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

Apply here: Senior Fellowships

The following materials (in English) are required to be submitted with the application**.** Page and word limits may not be exceeded, formal structure requirements must be fulfilled. **All required documents must be in PDF format.**

Information on the candidate and project (abstract, Layman's abstract to communicate the research project to a general public, ethical issue table, motivation statement) must be filled into the online application form.

Applicants are asked to provide a list of previously received grants and funding.

Additionally, the following attachments are required to be uploaded to the application portal:

- **Project proposal** (max. **3000 words**, including footnotes, headers, footers, and bibliographical references, 4 graphs) **must** have the following structure:

  (1) Research field, title, and short abstract of the research project
  (2) Aims, theoretical framework, and methodology of the project
  (3) Work plan and feasibility (time schedule)
  (4) Innovative potential, originality, and relevance of the project
  (5) Issues concerning research ethics
  (6) Bibliographical references

  Please note that the word count includes ALL words in the file sent, e.g. headers and footers, footnotes and bibliographical references.

- **CV** in tabular form (max. 2 pages). Mandatory template available for download in the application portal.

- **Publication list:** applicants must provide a list of publications that may not exceed 15 publications in total. 10 of those publications must be published after 1 January 2020 and must be peer-reviewed (Mandatory template available for download in the application portal.). (See Basic academic quality criteria).

- **Copy of the PhD diploma:** if the writing system/script used in the diploma is not Latin (for instance Cyrillic, Chinese), an official translation is requested**.**

- **Letter of Support** identifying a host laboratory in Freiburg where the research project can be carried out; only applicable to experimental scientists.

- **Experiment sketch and timetable:** only applicable to experimental scientists, who are required to submit a sketch and timetable of the experiments they wish to conduct in Freiburg.Selection Procedure

The selection process is highly competitive and strictly merit-based (expected success rate: ~5% of all eligible applications). It involves three steps:

1. Eligibility and basic quality check

To be eligible for application and proceed to the next step, candidates must fulfil **all** of
(1) the formal eligibility criteria and (2) the basic academic quality criteria (see above).

The formal eligibility and the basic quality check are conducted by the FRIAS Board of Directors under the supervision of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB is comprised of renowned senior scientists from outside the University of Freiburg and is responsible for the selection of applications for fellowships.

Applicants are informed on whether they have passed the basic eligibility check.

2. International peer-review by external experts

In the second stage, eligible proposals are forwarded to external experts who review and provide a written assessment of the applicant's research project and CV. These experts are selected based on criteria defined by the German Research Foundation (DFG):

- no formal affiliation to the applicant's university
- familiarity with the area of research
- distance from the applicant (non-bias)
- broad overview of the research landscape
- experience as a referee
- international expertise

The evaluation considers the following standardised criteria:

1. Academic excellence of the applicant (weighting 40 %):
   - Excellence of the candidate in terms of career development
   - Excellence of their contribution to the research field

2. Excellence of the proposed project (weighting 40 %):
   - Quality of the proposed project and the proposal
   - Innovativeness of the proposal

3. Experience and capability of the applicant (weighting 20 %):
   - Is the candidate well qualified to conduct the research project?

- Can the candidate be expected to benefit from a FRIAS fellowship?

Finally, all reviewers are asked to give a clear rating on the application:

- **Excellent** – relevant criteria are fully met and exceeded
- **Very good** – relevant criteria are fully met
- **Good** – relevant criteria are met, but with shortcomings
- **Fair** – while relevant criteria are met, weaknesses are clearly visible
- **Clearly below average** - relevant criteria are not sufficiently met

3. Final selection by FRIAS SAB

FRIAS Fellows are ultimately selected by the SAB. Both the FRIAS Board of Directors and the SAB are responsible for compliance with highest standards of academic quality in research programmes and selection processes.

Based on the original proposals and the expert reviews, the SAB creates a final ranking list. The top candidates are directly selected for funding and offered a fellowship at FRIAS. Additionally, there will be a waiting list to fill any positions not accepted by one of the initially selected applicants. Where two candidates are equally suitable for a post, priority will be given based on enhancing diversity and inclusion.

Calendar of implementation of the current selection process

Publication of the call for applications	July 2026
Submission deadline for applications	18 September 2026
Basic eligibility check	September 2026
Peer-review	October 2026 – January 2027
Final selection by SAB	February 2027
Notification of selected fellows	March 2027
Start of fellowships	1 September 2027

Financial Aspects

Successful applicants will become FRIAS Fellows with all the corresponding rights and obligations for the approved funding period.

Fellows with an employment contract at their home institution will receive a mobility allowance (if applicable) to compensate them for the extra costs of their stay in Freiburg. A reimbursement of teaching replacement costs throughout the fellowship up to the level of a W2 professorship is possible.

Fellows without an employment contract at their home institution will obtain an attractive salary (W2, 100%) on the condition of receiving no other income during the time of the fellowship. In case of a continued reduced salary by the home institution or alternative incomes, individual arrangements are subject to negotiation.

Each Fellow will additionally receive a research cost contribution and will be reimbursed for the travel costs of the inbound and the outbound journey to Freiburg (if applicable).

Redress

Complaints or a formal redress can be sent either to the FRIAS Director or to the University of Freiburg's Representative for Academic Self-Regulation at any stage of the application/selection process within 14 days after the notification of the result has been sent. However, in general, the referee reports and decisions of independent experts are not overruled.

FRIAS Director
Prof. Dr. Ralf von den Hoff
FRIAS, Albertstr. 19, 79104 Freiburg i.Br., Germany
redress@frias.uni-freiburg.de

Representative for Academic Self-Regulation

The representative investigates the concreteness and significance of the allegations in accordance with plausibility criteria and informs the responsible governing bodies if he deems further action to be necessary. He is bound to strict confidentiality. This is an official and independent position working on the basis of an official university statute.

Prof. Dr. Uwe Blaurock
University of Freiburg, Fahnenbergplatz, 79100 Freiburg, Germany uwe.blaurock@jura.uni-freiburg.de

Ethical Issues

The FRIAS Fellowship Programme considers both the need to ensure freedom of research and the need to protect the physical and moral integrity of individuals and the welfare of animals.

In order to identify ethical issues at an early point in the application process, all applicants are required to fill in the "Ethical Issues Table" provided on the application platform. Furthermore, applicants are requested to explain in detail in the project outline any ethical issues arising from their proposed research. Applicants must explain how these will be addressed.

A preliminary screening during the eligibility check also scrutinises potential ethical issues, even if they were not pointed out by the applicant. In addition, experts in the international peer-review procedure are asked to indicate relevant ethical issues raised by the proposal.

If the application successfully passes through the formal selection procedure, the project proposal is referred to the University's Ethics Committee (EC) in case any potential ethical issues are identified. The same procedure applies if ethical issues arise during work on a given project. The EC issues a decision that may include requirements and restrictions. This decision is binding under the employment contract and different laws. As soon as the decision is issued and if it does not impede the project, the fellowship is offered to the applicant. If the requirements and restrictions are extraordinarily difficult to fulfil, the SAB has the authority to turn down an application on these grounds.

Based on the European Commission's Code of Ethics for Researchers the following fields of research cannot be funded:

- Research activities directed at human cloning for reproductive purposes.
- Research activities intended to modify the genetic make-up of human beings that could make such changes heritable (apart from research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be funded).
- Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or stem cell procurement, including the technique of somatic cell nuclear transfer.
- Research that leads to the death of human embryos.

Ethical issues also include the avoidance of any breach of research integrity, which means, in particular, avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other kinds of research misconduct. In grave instances and after due process has established wrongdoings, fellowship offers can be retracted and current fellowships can be revoked.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply?

Applicants must complete and submit the online application form by 18 September 2026, 13:00 H CET. After registration you can edit the application form, upload the required annexes, and complete the ethical issues questionnaire. It is highly recommended to start the application early enough to become familiar with the technical processing. **Apply here:** Senior Fellowships

What if there are difficulties in accessing the online application site?

If you encounter difficulties in submitting your online application, please contact the Institute via e-mail: fellowships@frias.uni-freiburg.de

Do I have to indicate whether I used AI systems when preparing my proposal?

The use of AI systems must be disclosed in a manner appropriate to academic standards in the application portal. “Disclosure” currently means specifying which generative models were used, for what purpose and to what extent, for example in summarising the state of research, developing a research method, analysing data or generating hypotheses. AI tools that do not affect the content of the proposal (e.g. grammar, style or spell checks, translation tools) need not be disclosed.

Are there specific research priorities?

Projects of an open nature (e.g., preliminary projects intended to lead to larger third party funding) as well as those of a concluding nature (for instance, leave of absence for the publication of research results gathered earlier) can be supported within this funding period.

Applications are welcome from all disciplines that can be supported at the University of Freiburg. FRIAS encourages applicant to learn more about the University of Freiburg’s profile of particular research strengths.

Can I do fieldwork during the FRIAS fellowship?

As FRIAS offers residential fellowships, fellows are expected to actively contribute to the institute’s community and regularly participate in scheduled events. Consequently, extended fieldwork outside the Freiburg area cannot be funded during the fellowship period. However, short-term leave (such as attending a conference or visiting a collaborator or short archive visits) is permitted in consultation with the directorate.

Does the location of my home institution play a role in my eligibility to apply?

Applicants from around the world are invited to apply. This also includes applicants who are based in Germany or are currently working at the University of Freiburg.

Will working space be provided?

FRIAS will provide fully furnished offices for double occupancy and, whenever possible, single occupancy. Prior to submission of the application, experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg.

Do I need to find an academic host at the University of Freiburg?

In general, applicants do not need an academic host at the University of Freiburg. However, experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg (including letter of support) prior to submission of the application.

How is documented leave/ leave of absence calculated for family, medical reasons or non-academic activities?

The time period of the basic academic criteria regarding publications can be extended, if the applicant has a documented time off due to family or medical reasons.

Maternity time off is calculated with 18 months per child, whereas in case of paternal or medical time-off, the documented timeframe is relevant. The time off must be accrued during the time period that is relevant for the eligibility criteria

Do fellowships need to start 1 September 2027?

Fellowships must be conducted within the period between 1 September 2027 and 31 August 2028.

Is there support for fellows with families?

Our FRIAS fellow service team assists families in finding suitable accommodation in the Freiburg area considering their needs regarding price, size, and location. Together with the University of Freiburg's Family Service, we provide information on the German system of childcare and schools. Fellows are supported in finding appropriate childcare facilities and in the process of enrolling their children at day-care centres, kindergarten, and schools.

Do you have further questions?

Please feel free to contact us at FRIAS via e-mail: fellowships@frias.uni-freiburg.de