

# Application guidelines

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## Application deadlines

Applications are accepted throughout the year

**EMBC Member states:** Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, and United Kingdom

**EMBC/EMBO global partners:** Chile, India, Singapore, Taiwan

Starting from July 2024, current PIs, Co-PIs, and researchers registered in the project plan (in Japanese "研究参加者") from scientists funded by the following programmes of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) are eligible to apply for a Scientific Exchange Grant: [ASPIRE](#), [FOREST](#) (in Japanese known as "創発的研究支援事業"), [PRESTO](#) (in Japanese known as "さきがけ"), [ACT-X](#), ERATO, CREST.

**EMBO subject areas:** Cell Cycle, Cell & Tissue Architecture, Cellular Metabolism, Chromatin & Transcription, Development, Differentiation & Death, Evolution & Ecology, Genome Stability & Dynamics, Genomic & Computational Biology, Immunology, Membranes & Transport, Microbiology, Virology & Pathogens, Molecular Medicine, Neuroscience, Plant Biology, Proteins & Biochemistry, RNA, Signal Transduction, Structural Biology & Biophysics, Systems Biology

**Contact:** fellowships@embo.org

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## Guidelines for EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants:

Applications for EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants are accepted via the online application system. The application and all related correspondence with the Fellowship Office must be in English.

There are no deadlines for applications and awards are being made throughout the year. Selections for funding are made by the EMBO Programme Head based on reports from the EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants Advisory Board.

Please check the eligibility criteria before applying.

Should you have questions regarding your application, please contact [fellowships@embo.org](mailto:fellowships@embo.org).

## Purpose

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EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants fund research visits of one week (seven days) up to three months (90 days) between laboratories in EMBC Member States, Associated Member States or Cooperation Partners (see page 2). Scientific Exchange Grants are also open to applications from scientists funded by specific programmes of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) (see page 2).

Awarded applicants can stay on their research visit for an additional three months (maximum), however, EMBO will not provide funding for this extended period.

EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants are not awarded for exchanges between two laboratories within the same country.

EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants are intended for joint research work, rather than consultations, to establish new scientific relationships.

Only in **exceptional cases** will EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants be awarded for research visits outside the countries listed above. For such cases, it is essential that a justification be provided of why there is no appropriate expertise or technology in EMBC Member States, Associated Member States or Cooperation Partners.

Applications from outside EMBC Member States, Associated Member States, Cooperation Partners will not be considered except for applications from scientists funded by specific programmes of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) – see above.

# Eligibility

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## Eligibility criteria checked by the EMBO Office

- The applicant must be an active research scientist at any stage in their career with at least one year of graduate research experience or equivalent at the time of application.
- An applicant who has previously held an EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant or Postdoctoral Fellowship is eligible to re-apply for an EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant if it is for **a new project in a different laboratory**. Reapplication is possible twelve months after the end of the previous Scientific Exchange Grant or in the case of unsuccessful applicants, the date of application.
- Applications to work with former colleagues, PhD or postdoc supervisors or to work in laboratories previously visited will not be considered.
- Applications to visit laboratories in the context of an already existing collaboration (also considering joint grants and/or co-publications) or involving previous exchanges of scientists will not be considered.
- Upon completion of the fellowship, applicants must immediately return to their home laboratory and remain for **at least six consecutive months** in order for the home laboratory to benefit from the exchange. A signed letter **in English** from the home institution after this period is required.

## Please note:

- It is possible to hold both an EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant and Postdoctoral Fellowship at the same time, provided that the Scientific Exchange Grant is used to fund a short research exchange within the context of the same project funded by the Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- EMBO does not consider applications for EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants to extend visits begun under other auspices, or as bridging fellowships between, or prior to, long term stays funded by EMBO or other organizations.
- Applications for fellowships to attend courses, workshops, or symposia will not be considered. Similarly, EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants do not provide additional funding for courses, conference travel, bench fees, overheads or any other expenses beyond travel costs between the laboratories involved and [subsistence rates](#) depending on the country visited.
- EMBO does not cover Visa costs. EMBO cannot advise on Visa or Tax matters. Please refer to the administration in the host or home institutions for help on these issues.

- Applications to work on a project purely applied, intended to develop a product (commercial or not) or a procedure will not be considered. All projects must have a biological significance and should aim to increase our knowledge on a particular biological process. Applications for the exclusive purpose of training in a technique will be considered if it fits within the context of work being carried out in the home lab.
- It is not possible to apply for an EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant if other, parallel exchanges are planned to take place between the home and the host laboratories during the planned fellowship duration. Short (one- or two-day) visits or seminar invitations are not considered in this category.
- If the applicant has secured additional funds or grants from other institutions to support the proposed visit, the applicant must notify the EMBO Fellowship Office immediately. Two sources of funding are allowed, but EMBO will deduct the amount of the other fellowship from the grant awarded as an EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant.

## Application process

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Applications for an EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant are accepted via the EMBO online application system.

All applications must be written in English.

All applicants must register for [ORCID digital identifiers](#) to ensure unambiguous name assignment.

## Timeline

There are no deadlines for applications and awards are being made throughout the year. However, it is strongly recommended that applications be submitted at least three months before the proposed start date of the research visit. At minimum, applications must be submitted 30 days before the start date of the research visit. A decision is usually made within two to four months from submission of a complete application.

## Application procedure

- All submitted applications are screened by the EMBO fellowship office to ensure eligibility requirements are met. Receipt of submitted applications will be acknowledged via email. If you don't receive an acknowledgement from the fellowship office within 2 weeks post submission of an application, please contact the office.
- Final decisions will be made by the Head of the EMBO Fellowship Programme based on reports provided by the EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants Advisory Board.
- Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by email.

## Application form

The online application form, will ask you to provide information on:

- Contact details of two referees
- Address of the receiving institute and contact details of the host institute supervisor
- A summary of the proposed work
- A summary of your current work
- Basic CV
- Your ORCID ID (if you do not have one, please register at <https://orcid.org/register>)
- Funding sources

The application for EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants is electronic only. Hard copies will not be processed. This refers to all relevant documents including not only the application form, but also the reference letters and the host institute acceptance form.

## Letters of reference

The applicant must provide the names and contact details of two referees (who are not from the host institute) who will submit their confidential letters of reference online. One of the referees must be the current supervisor. The referees will be asked to provide an assessment of the applicant (maximum 200 words). In addition, the home/current supervisor will be asked to explain the benefit of the project for the applicant (maximum 200 words) and for the home lab (maximum 200 words).

If the applicant is an independent researcher, only one reference letter from a representative of the home institution (Dean, Director etc.) who is familiar with the work of the applicant is required. If this applies to you, please contact [fellowships@embo.org](mailto:fellowships@embo.org) to have your application form updated.

## Receiving institute form

The applicant should co-ordinate their application with that of the receiving institute. The applicant must provide the name and contact details of their host supervisor who will submit the acceptance form online. The host supervisor will be asked to explain the benefits of the collaboration (maximum 200 words) and how the project was conceived (maximum 200 words) including providing references (maximum 5) for their recent work on the described project.

Note that finding a host supervisor is the responsibility of the applicant. Before starting an application, applicants must discuss and agree on their proposal with the host supervisor.

## Proposed work

The research proposal should be **well argued and written by the applicant**. The proposal is subdivided in two parts: 1) a **200-word summary** describing the research proposal and the biological significance of the proposed work and 2) the **research proposal** itself, which must not exceed 1800 words (excluding references). Citations should be included in the text (maximum 15 citations), using Vancouver/numbering style with references numbered in the text within brackets ().

The research proposal is divided into three parts: **the first part** should explain the background and rationale for the proposed research (maximum 500 words). **The second part** should describe the key aim (overall goal) and objectives (steps/actions needed to achieve the aim) of the research proposal (maximum 300 words). **The third part** (maximum 1000 words) should contain **a detailed outline of the work to be performed at the host institute** including a timeline for each objective. **No figures or tables may be included.**

The references for the research proposal (maximum 15 references) should be listed in a separate box and include the **complete list of authors** followed by the **title** of the paper, **journal or preprint server name, year and doi**.

The applicant should also describe how the home lab will benefit from the visit (maximum 200 words) and provide a justification for the choice of host lab (maximum 200 words).

As mentioned above only in **exceptional cases** will EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants be awarded for research visits outside EMBC Member States, Associated Member States or Cooperation Partners. For such cases, a justification must be provided for why the research can't be done in EMBC Member States, Associated Member States or Cooperation Partner lab.

### Previous collaborations between host & home labs:

EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants are meant to establish new collaborations and applications to visit laboratories in the context of an already existing collaboration or involving previous exchanges of scientists will not be considered. Applicants will be asked to specify if there is an existing or previous collaboration between host & home lab (including co-publications and joint grants) and if so, describe current and past interactions between host and home lab (maximum 100 words).

Please keep in mind that all the research activities supported by the EMBO Fellowship Programme must be **in compliance with fundamental ethical and research integrity principles**, such as those set out in the [Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research](#), and in the [Singapore Statement on Research Integrity](#). These refer to questions relevant to the use in research of human materials, including human embryonic stem cells, use of animal models and, in general, any other



potential ethical issues that may arise during the applicant's daily research activities. Applicants will be asked if ethical approval is needed for the proposed experiments at the host institute and if so if this has been granted.

In line with our commitment to those principles, we provide all EMBO awardees with free access to an online course on research integrity. Completion of the course is strongly encouraged by EMBO.

## Present work

The synopsis of work performed at the home institute should allow the reader, in a brief and concise manner, to appreciate both the applicant's past experience and its relevance to the proposed research topic (maximum 500 words). Applicants must clearly communicate their career plans for the period following the EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant (maximum 200 words).

Keep in mind that the proposed project must be directly related to the work being developed in the home laboratory.

## Publication list

In the publication list, applicants should indicate their scientific publications in the past five years using the following format: authors, title, journal/preprint, year, doi (mark applicant's name with an asterisk\*). Applicants should NOT include the journal impact factor. EMBO is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA, <http://www.ascb.org/dora/>), which recommends "not to use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions".

Papers published in preprint servers (e.g. arXiv, bioRxiv, PeerJ) will also be taken into consideration. Papers submitted or in preparation, but not yet accessible to the community, will not be considered and must not be included in the list of publications. **Publication updates after the application is complete will not be accepted.**

**Please note:** An application is only complete once both reference letters (if applicable) and the host institute acceptance form have been received. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is complete and to submit. Upon submission of an application, the EMBO Fellowship Office will acknowledge receipt and will assign a Scientific Exchange Grant (SEG) number. If you don't receive an acknowledgement from the fellowship office within 2 weeks post submission of an application, please contact the office.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

EMBO acknowledges the value of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, as well as human feedback, in the preparation of funding applications. Applicants are fully and solely responsible for the originality and accuracy of their applications.

To provide transparency, applicants are requested to disclose whether AI tools were used in preparing their applications, and for what purpose (e.g., *chatGPT was used to improve language style*). EMBO will continue following the developments in generative AI and adapt this policy as required.

# Selection

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All applications are examined at the EMBO Fellowship Office to ensure that they are complete and eligible. Receipt of complete applications will be acknowledged via email. Applications are judged on the following criteria:

- Quality of the project to be developed in the host laboratory (novelty, feasibility).
- The suitability of the host laboratory for the proposed work.
- The topic needs to be covered in sufficient depth and breadth to evaluate merit of proposal and feasibility.
- Value of the exchange for the home laboratory (expertise or technology transfer, collaboration, co publication).
- CV of the candidate, and in particular research experience.

Final decisions are made by the Fellowship Programme Head based on reports from the EMBO Short-Term Grants Advisory Board.

# Benefits

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The fellowships contribute towards travel costs and subsistence of the fellow but not of any dependents. The [subsistence rate](#) depends on the country being visited.

EMBO funds research visits of a maximum of three months. If additional funding is available from another source and it is scientifically justified, awardees can apply for an extension of an additional three months not covered by EMBO. It is possible to apply directly for more than three months (up to 180 days) but the EMBO grant must be used for the first three months of the visit.

# Final report

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At the end of the fellowship, applicants are asked to provide EMBO with a report of their activity at the host institute. The report should be sent to [fellowships@embo.org](mailto:fellowships@embo.org). **Please note that you need to indicate your SEG number and your current address on your final report.**

The final report must be submitted to the fellowship after the research visit. The report should be about two pages and should summarize the results as well as possible plans for further work to be undertaken. It may include diagrams, charts or illustrations. Upon receipt of the final report, the Fellowship Office will send a

certificate stating the start date and duration of the fellowship, the place where it was held, the SEG number and the title of the project developed.

Applicants must provide a **letter signed by their home institution** certifying that **they have returned to work there** for at least 6 months after the completion of the EMBO Scientific Exchange Grant. This letter must be written in English.

Both the final report and letter of return must be submitted six months after the research visit.