



EMBO Young Investigator Programme EMBO Installation Grants

Programme committee guidelines 2021

Gerlind Wallon
Programme Head
EMBO Young Investigator Network: YIP | IG | GIN
gerlind.wallon@embo.org

Lena Steshenko
Senior Programme Officer
EMBO Young Investigator Network: YIP | IG | GIN
olena.steshenko@embo.org

Rita Freischlad
Programme Assistant
EMBO Young Investigator Network: YIP | IG | GIN
rita.freischlad@embo.org

Young Investigator Programme application deadlines 2021:

Pre-application to the EMBO Young Investigator Programme: 1 April 2021, 12:00 CEST

Referee submission of reference letters: 1 April, 12:00 CEST

Full application to the EMBO Young Investigator Programme: 20 July 2021, 12:00 CEST

Interview in Heidelberg, Germany (or optionally online): 9-10 November 2021

Installation Grant application deadlines 2021:

Applications for an Installation Grant: 15 April, 12:00 CEST

Interview in Heidelberg, Germany (or optionally online): 8 November 2021

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, Turkey, and United Kingdom

EMBC Associate Member States:

India, Singapore

Countries/territories covered by a co-operation agreement:

Taiwanese Ministry of Science, National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT), Chile

SDIG 2021 participating countries:

Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Portugal, Montenegro, Lithuania, Turkey

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: yip@embo.org

EMBO YIP Committee 2021¹:

Alexander Aulehla (DE)

Buzz Baum (UK)

Christoph Dehio (CH) (chair)

Pascal Genschik (FR)

Ana-Maria Lennon (FR)

Guillermina López-Bendito (ES)

Antonella de Matteis (IT)

Marcin Nowotny (PL)

Jan-Michael Peters (AT)

Irmgard Sinning (DE)

Michael Sixt (AT)

¹ Additional new committee members TBC

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The EMBO Young Investigator Programme and EMBO Installation Grants

The EMBO Young Investigator Programme (YIP)

EMBO chooses some of the best young group leaders in Europe through a competitive annual selection to join the EMBO Young Investigator Programme. A key aspect of the programme is networking. EMBO Young Investigators benefit from a network of over 600 scientists, made up of current and former Young Investigators, recipients of an EMBO Installation Grant (see below) and EMBO Global Investigators². Moreover, during their four-year tenure in the programme, EMBO Young Investigators receive a range of financial and practical benefits.

The programme offers:

- An annual meeting.
- EMBO YIP lecture: support for lectures given by EMBO Young Investigators at international meetings.
- Lab management training: fee waived for programme members attending EMBO Lab Leadership courses.
- EMBO provides funds to support networking among EMBO Young Investigators and other scientists.
- EMBO mentorship: an EMBO Member chosen by the Young Investigator serves as his/her mentor. EMBO provides funds towards an annual visit.
- PhD course for the students of the EMBO Young Investigators and Installation Grantees.
- Access to the EMBL core facilities.
- Financial award of 15,000 euro during the second year.
- Possibility to apply for small grants of up to 10,000 euro.
- Childcare support funds.

EMBO Installation Grants (IG)

The EMBO Installation Grants were launched in 2006 as a special project of EMBC by a subset of its member states. These grants help scientists to relocate to participating member states, set up their labs and establish a reputation in the European scientific community. The scheme is entirely funded by the participating EMBC Member States and successful applicants receive an annual award of 50,000 euro for three to five years.

Selections and management of these grants are carried out under the umbrella of the EMBO Young Investigator Network.

In 2021 applications will be accepted from applicants setting up labs in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Portugal, Poland, Lithuania, Montenegro and Turkey. Installation Grantees are eligible for all the benefits of the Young Investigator Programme, but they are not eligible for the EMBO YIP lecture.

² The EMBO Global Investigator Network (GIN) has a separate committee and selection process (via the EMBO Global Activities Office). However, programme members of the YIP, IG and GIN form the EMBO Young Investigator Network (YIN) where networking across programmes is encouraged and supported.

The EMBO Young Investigator Committee

Terms of reference

EMBO committees act in an advisory role to EMBO Council. The authority to make decisions on the funding of applications to the EMBO Young Investigator Programme has been delegated by EMBO Council to the EMBO Young Investigator Committee.

The EMBO Young Investigator Committee is comprised of Members with different areas of scientific expertise. Committee members normally serve a four-year term. The Young Investigator Committee suggests replacements for outgoing committee members. The suggested names are submitted to EMBO Council for appointment. New committee members are invited by the EMBO YIP Office.

The committee selects a chair (normally a current member of the committee with some experience on the committee) and the proposed name is brought to EMBO Council for appointment. The chair serves a term of three years in addition to the number of years they have already served on the committee. When a chair finishes their term, the committee members will be asked by written procedure to propose a new chairperson. Only proposals received by written procedure prior to the committee meeting can be voted upon.

The Young Investigator Committee meets once per year to interview the top candidates and make the final selections. All proposals are confidential until approved by the Young Investigator Committee and announced publicly.

All travel and accommodation expenses incurred by committee members attending committee meetings are covered by EMBO.

Tasks of the EMBO Young Investigator Committee

The EMBO Young Investigator Committee oversees both YIP and IG Programmes. The committee receives an annual report (written and oral) summarising the programme's activities.

The committee is responsible for the selection of Young Investigators (YIPs) and submits a ranking of Installation Grant applicants to the EMBC Strategic Installation Grant Board (SDIG Board) and makes recommendations for extension or termination of existing Installation Grants to a five-year period.

EMBO receives about 200 applications annually for the EMBO Young Investigator Programme and about 60 applications for the EMBO Installation Grants.

Each committee member will be asked to pre-screen approximately 85 YIP applications and participate in the interviews of approximately 25 candidates during the committee meeting in Heidelberg. In addition, approximately 60 applications to the Installation Grants must be reviewed (5-6 per committee member) and approximately 20 candidates will be invited to an interview in Heidelberg. Each committee member will act as primary reviewer for 2-3 interviewees. Final decisions on the YI applicant selection and IG applicant ranking are made at the committee meeting.

All travel and accommodation expenses incurred to attend this meeting are fully covered by EMBO.

EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy

Committee members are asked to indicate any conflicts of interest. Please take note of EMBO's Conflict of Interest Policy on [Annex I, page 15](#). The following situations may arise for Young Investigator Committee members:

Situation	Level of conflict	Consequence
Being an advisor of the applicant for this application	High	Excluded from review process*
Being an active collaborator with the applicant or having collaborated during the previous five years	High	Excluded from review process*
Being a partner of the applicant	High	Excluded from review process*
Having a PhD or postdoctoral/training relationship with the applicant now or during the previous five years	High	Excluded from review process*
Working in same institution/university	High	Excluded from review process*
Having a financial interest in the application	High	Excluded from review process*

*Cannot be assigned as a reviewer/primary interviewer of the proposal; cannot participate in the discussions related to that particular application, i.e. needs to leave the room while the discussion takes place and cannot be present during the interview. If you have any questions about a potential conflict of interest, please contact the EMBO YIP Office (yip@embo.org).

Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality is expected regarding all applications. Information received during the review process and the committee meeting should not be relayed to third parties.

The EMBO Young Investigator Programme selection procedure

Overview

Application and selection to the EMBO Young Investigator Programme is a two-step process. In the first step, applicants submit a short application consisting of their CV, list of publications, short summary of research interests and three letters of reference. The committee pre-selects the top 50 candidates. These candidates are invited to submit a full application as well as attend an interview with the committee. The full application is sent for written review to an EMBO Member who is expert in the research area of the applicant to provide an additional view to the committee.

KEY DATES (2021) (Bold text indicates a deadline for committee members)

1 April	Deadline for pre-applications to the EMBO YIP
4 May	YIP pre-application files sent to committee for pre-screening
31 May	Deadline for votes from YIP pre-screen committee
Mid-late June	Full applications invited
20 July	Deadline for full applications
Early October	Receipt of complete files by committee members
8 November	Committee meeting and IG interviews
9 – 10 November	YIP interviews

Eligibility criteria

- Applicants should have been an independent group leader for at least one year and less than four years at the pre-application deadline (no earlier than 01.04.2017 and no later than 01.04.2020).
- Applicants should have an excellent track record.
- Candidates must do research in the life sciences (see EMBO subject areas) in an EMBC Member State or an EMBC Associate Member State (currently India and Singapore) or countries / territories covered by a cooperation agreement (currently Chile and Taiwan).
- Medical scientists working in the fields related to general EMBO subject areas are eligible to apply.
- Applicants are expected to have obtained sufficient funding to run their laboratory (consumables, lab space, salary for themselves and their staff).
- Applicants must have published at least one **last author research paper** in an international peer reviewed journal from independent work carried out in their own laboratory. EMBO will consider papers published on preprint servers (arXiv, BioRxiv, PeerJ., etc.) but a last author publication in an international peer reviewed journal is still a requirement by the time of the interview.
- Applicants must be able to attend an interview in Heidelberg, Germany, or optionally online, on 9 or 10 November 2021.

Please note:

- We accept last author research papers that have “in submission” status by the deadline (1 April 2021). Last author reviews are not accepted.
- For female candidates with children, the limit of four-years since independence is automatically extended by one year per child.
- For male applicants with children, the limit can be extended by the actual time taken off as paternity leave or – if their partner is working at least 80% FTE (full-time equivalent) – 3 months per child, whichever is longer.
- Illness and other care responsibilities are considered as exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Special provision may also be made for clinical scientists.

Evaluation procedure

Application forms

The application files will be made available electronically as PDF.

The pre-application consists of:

- CV
- list of publications
- three letters of reference

The full application contains:

- A summary form with:
 - short summary of the research plan
 - a short version of the CV
 - a list of three scientists providing letters of reference
 - a list of lab members
 - a list of funding available to the laboratory
- An application form with:
 - CV
 - publication list
 - details of three best papers by the applicant
 - a two-page description of their research vision
- A short description of the host institute’s facilities relevant to the candidate’s research.
- Three letters of reference.

Pre-screening procedure

Candidates to the EMBO Young Investigator Programme are first pre-screened to eliminate weaker candidates in order to allow more time to identify the top scientists in an interview procedure. The pre-screen committee pre-selects applicants who should be interviewed.

The pre-screen committee consists of committee members who have served more than one year on the committee, including outgoing members from the previous year.

The 2021 pre-screen committee members are: Buzz Baum, Gerhard Christofori, Christoph Dehio, Carlos Dotti, Pascal Genschik, Darren Gilmour, Ana-Maria Lennon, Antonella de Matteis, Jan-Michael Peters, and Irmi Sinning.

It is the aim of the pre-screen procedure to reduce the number of candidates to around 50. Each committee member will be sent about 85 applications. Each application is scored by four committee members.

Applications should be graded as follows:

- A: strong candidate for interview
- B: potential candidate for interview
- C: not strong enough to interview
- D: weak candidate

Results are expected by 31 May 2021.

In consultation with the committee chair, the YIP Office will then draw up a list of the approximately 50 candidates who will be invited to submit a full application and attend the interview.

Special committee for applications from India

Through the co-operation agreement with the governments of Taiwan and Chile, and EMBC Associate Member State agreements with the governments of Singapore and India, there is provision for EMBO Young Investigators from India, Singapore, Taiwan and Chile (all costs for this are covered by the host countries).

For India, a separate pre-screen committee has been established that will limit the number of applications put forward to the committee for pre-screen. The number of applications put forward will depend on the overall number and quality of applications received but will not exceed 10 applications. The files of these top candidates will be included in the regular pre-screen procedure.

This committee consists of:

- Carsten Janke, Institute Curie, Orsay, FR
- Satyajit (Jitu) Mayor, National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore, IN
- M. Madan Babu, MRC-LMB, Cambridge, UK
- Chunaram Choudhary, University of Copenhagen, DK
- Ashok Venkitaraman, Cancer Science Institute of Singapore, SG

External assessment

An EMBO Member, who is an expert in the applicant's area of research is requested to provide a confidential assessment of the candidate based on the written application, focusing on their standing in the field and feasibility of the proposed work.

Assignment to committee members

Each committee member will be assigned to one of two sub-committees, each of which will interview around 25 candidates. Ahead of the meeting, the EMBO YIP Office will send all committee members a list of candidates to be interviewed. Conflicts of interest regarding particular candidates should be declared prior to the final assignments (see [Annex I on page 15](#), EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy, for further details). Committee members receive the full applications with reviewer's reports and committee members are assigned as a primary interviewer to four or five applicants. In this role, they lead the discussion with and on the candidate, i.e. starting and moderating the questions to the candidate, making sure that questions regarding the independence of the candidate, and possibly other issues are satisfactorily explored during the interview.

Evaluation criteria

Committee members should bear in mind that the candidate is not applying for a research grant. Instead, the potential to become a leader in European research is being evaluated. Please mind that EMBO is a signatory of DORA and does not use journal-based metrics such as impact factor during the assessment process. We ask all applicants NOT to include these in their publication list.

The following aspects of each application shall be evaluated:

A. TRACK RECORD

- Are the publications to date an indication that this is an outstanding scientist?
- Has the applicant shown a willingness to change research area, which is an indication of an ability to tackle new and important problems?

B. RESEARCH

- Is the proposed research ambitious and likely to lead to novel contributions in the field?
- Does the applicant have the potential to become a future leader in their field?

C. GROUP AND RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

- Is the research environment conducive to competitive research?
- Are the number of laboratory members and the available funds sufficient to undertake the described research?

D. INDEPENDENCE

- Is the candidate intellectually and financially independent? What is the influence of former supervisors and institute/department heads on the candidate's current research?

Committee meeting and YIP interviews

The committee meeting takes place at the EMBO YIP Office in Heidelberg on 8 November 2021 (as do the interviews for the EMBO Installation Grants). The two full days following the meeting (9-10 November) are dedicated to the interviews of the applicants to the EMBO Young Investigator Programme.

Interviews will be held by two sub-committees in parallel. Each candidate will have a 30-minute time slot: 10 minutes to present their work followed by 10 minutes for questions. The remaining 10 minutes are reserved for the committee to discuss the application and provide a preliminary ranking in comparison to other candidates interviewed that day.

The sub-committees need to finalize the ranking of the candidates at the end of each day, as the composition of the sub-committees will change each day.

On the evening of the second interview day, the committee will compare and discuss the rankings and make the final selection of EMBO Young Investigators.

The EMBO Installation Grants Selection procedure

Overview

Candidates submit an application, which is screened by the EMBO YIP Office to ensure eligibility requirements are met. Eligible applications are pre-screened by the EMBO Young Investigator committee. Approximately 20 of the applicants are selected to attend an interview with the committee in Heidelberg on 8 November 2021.

KEY DATES (2021) (Bold text indicates a deadline for committee members)

15 April	Deadline for IG applications
4 May	IG application files sent to committee for pre-screening
June 7	Deadline for votes from IG pre-screen committee
Early October	Receipt of complete files by committee members
8 November	Committee meeting and IG interviews

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must be negotiating a full-time position at an institute or university in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Portugal, Lithuania, Montenegro or Turkey by the date of application, or have established a laboratory in one of these countries in the last two years (no earlier than 15.04.2019). In the four years prior to application, applicants should have spent at least two consecutive years outside the country in which they are planning to establish their laboratory.

Evaluation procedure

Application forms

Application for an Installation Grant consists of two separate applications, one submitted by the scientist and another submitted by the receiving institute. The application files will be electronically available in PDF format.

The scientist's application includes:

- Summary form with:
 - a short summary of the research plan
 - a short version of the CV
 - details of three scientists providing letters of reference
 - details of funding available to the laboratory.
- Application form with:
 - a short description of previous research carried out by the candidate
 - a CV and a list of publications
 - details of the applicant's two best papers.
- A short description of the host institute's facilities relevant to the candidate's research.
- A breakdown of how the potential budget will be used.
- A three-page description of the research project.
- Three letters of reference.

The institute's form includes a description of:

- the offer that is being made to the applicant (i.e. staff, laboratory space, etc.)
- the institute's infrastructure
- available equipment
- relevant colleagues (i.e. to show that other scientists at the institute work in areas that are relevant to the applicant's research)
- the duties of the applicant.

The Head of Department submits a signed form confirming the offer.

Pre-screening procedure

The programme committee will screen out the weakest applications. Applicants will be informed of the results of the pre-screen by mid-June. Each application is sent to three committee members for evaluation and ranking. Applications should be graded as follows:

- A: strong candidate for interview
- B: potential candidate for interview
- C: not strong enough for interview
- D: weak candidate

External assessment

An EMBO Member, who is an expert in the applicant's area of research is requested to provide a confidential assessment of the candidate, focusing on their standing in the field and feasibility of the proposed work.

Interview

Each committee member will be assigned to one of three sub-committees, each of which will interview around 7 candidates. Ahead of the meeting, the EMBO YIP Office will send all committee members a list of candidates to be interviewed. Conflicts of interest regarding particular candidates should be declared prior to the final assignments ([see Annex I on page 15](#), EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy, for further details). Committee members receive the full applications with reviewer's reports and committee members are assigned as a primary interviewer to two to three applicants. In this role, they lead the discussion with and on the candidate, i.e. starting and moderating the questions to the candidate, making sure that questions regarding the independence of the candidate, and possibly other issues, are satisfactorily explored during the interview.

Each candidate will have a 30-minute timeslot: 10 minutes to present their work followed by 10 minutes for questions. The remaining 10 minutes are reserved for the committee to discuss the application and make a preliminary ranking in comparison to other candidates interviewed.

Final decision

The committees need to finalize the ranking of the candidates by the end of the day. The ranking is forwarded to the Strategic Development Installation Grant (SDIG) Board. The ranking is binding and cannot be changed by the Board. The Board consists of delegates from EMBC Member States who participate in the Installation Grant scheme and meets at the end of November. Board members will inform EMBO how many of the candidates will receive a grant to move to their respective countries. The Board is not able to change the ranking provided by the committee but can decide to take any number of candidates.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are similar to those of the Young Investigators. For the Installation Grants, however, the application of the host institute plays an important role. Since the candidates will be applying to go to places that normally will not have an equally strong scientific environment as the Young Investigators, it is important that the host institute offers good support and provides an environment where the candidate can thrive. There have been cases where candidates have not been awarded because the offer from the host institute was perceived as not adequate.

The following aspects of each application shall be evaluated:

A. TRACK RECORD

- Are the publications to date an indication that this is an outstanding scientist?
- Has the applicant shown a willingness to change research area, which is an indication of an ability to tackle new and important problems?
- Please mind that EMBO is a signatory of DORA and does not use journal-based metrics such as impact factor during the assessment process. We ask all applicants NOT to include these in their publication list.

B. RESEARCH

- Is the proposed research ambitious and likely to lead to novel contributions in the field?

C. GROUP AND RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

- Is the research environment conducive to competitive research?
- Are the number of laboratory members and the available funds sufficient to undertake the described research?

D. OFFER BY THE HOST INSTITUTE

- Does the host institute provide a good environment for the applicant, i.e. sufficient lab space, basic lab equipment, access to central facilities, availability of funding for students/technicians/postdoctoral researchers, colleagues relevant to the applicant's area of research, etc.
- What are the teaching requirements and other responsibilities of the applicant? Is the time that can be dedicated to research sufficient?

E. INDEPENDENCE

- Is the candidate intellectually and financially independent?

Evaluation of Installation Grant extensions

Installation Grants are awarded for a period of five years, subject to positive review scheduled in the third year. In the spring of the third year, grantees are asked to submit a short scientific report and to ask their institute to comment on their progress.

Each report is sent to a current member of the committee who is asked to comment on the grantee's progress. These reviews are sent to the committee along with the report from the scientist and their institute. During the committee meeting, the committee discusses the grantees' progress and makes a recommendation regarding the two-year extension.

The committee's recommendation of either "recommended for funding" or "not recommended for funding" is presented to the Strategic Development Installation Grant Board, which will fund the candidate for a further two years following a positive review.

Annex I: EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy

EMBO is supported by several expert committees in the evaluation of applications or nominations submitted to any of its programmes and activities. The task of the evaluator is to ensure the confidential, fair and equitable peer review of the submissions. In this capacity the evaluator shall work independently and not represent any organization. The evaluator commits themselves to strict confidentiality and impartiality for this task and shall not discuss the proposal with anyone not directly involved with the peer review of the candidate/proposal.

Persons who are involved in the evaluation of applications or nominations submitted to any of the EMBO programmes and activities shall declare to the EMBO Office any conflict of interest in relation to any candidate or proposal prior to their involvement in an evaluation. Persons with a conflict of interest will be exempt from the review, evaluation and decision-making process for the evaluation in question.

Conflicts of interest include:

1. Having a personal relationship with the candidate or proposer, or, in the case of a fellowship applicant, with the future supervisor/host.
2. Having supervised the candidate for a PhD degree or as a postdoctoral researcher.
3. Having a significant academic relationship with the candidate, or in the case of a fellowship applicant, with the future supervisor/host; this includes having jointly published a research paper in the last five years.
4. Being a member of the candidate's department or institution.
5. Having a current or planned close scientific cooperation.
6. Having commercial/financial interests in relation to the candidate/proposal.
7. Having been involved in the preparation of the proposal.
8. Benefitting directly or indirectly from the acceptance or rejection of the proposal/candidate (i.e. direct competition).
9. Being in any other situation that could cast doubt on the evaluator's ability to evaluate the proposal impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party.