Frequently Asked Questions - WINNINGNormandy

What is the main objective of WN Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme?

The WN Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme supports individual researchers at postdoctoral level and beyond to work on a research project of their own design that advances their careers. Mobility (see MSCA Mobility Rule definition) is required in order to acquire new skills and experience, as well as to enhance the employability of the supported researcher in the future. Mobility between the academic and non-academic sector or international mobility is also encouraged where this increases the impact of the fellowship.

What kind of project can be funded?

Individual researchers prepare proposals for funding in liaison with their planned Host Research unit. Proposals are judged on their research quality, the researcher's qualifications and his/her career prospects. The award criteria are detailed in full in the Guide for Applicants.

What can be the duration of a project?

The fellowship will have a duration of 2 years.

What are the Post-doctoral Fellowships Programme opportunities for Norman academic institutions?

The WINNINGNormandy Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme enables institutions to host highly talented researchers, whose proposals are competitively peer-reviewed on the basis of research excellence. The researchers must have a certain amount of experience in the profession, as they must be in possession of a doctorate or have at least four years of fulltime research experience behind them (the latter experience starts after the degree entitling him/her to embark on a doctorate). Furthermore, they will bring experience from elsewhere in Europe or possibly beyond, as the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme requires mobility (see MSCA Mobility Rule definition) to a host organisation in another country.

What are the Post-doctoral Fellowships Programme opportunities for SMEs and companies?

SMEs and industrial partners can host a Fellow for a Secondment and thus benefit from the services and valuable experience of a highly talented researcher. The secondment will give the opportunity to the Fellow to develop new skills. Both will reinforce their network.

Can the Fellow submit a research project in any field?

The Fellow can develop the research project of his/her choice but it should address one of the 6 Norman Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (S3) domains.

What is Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (S3)?

‘Smart specialisation strategies’ refer to the national or regional innovation strategies which set priorities in order to build competitive advantage by developing and matching research and innovation own strengths to business needs in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner, while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts.
In Normandy, 6 S3 domains are identified:

1. Preserving and sustainably transforming agricultural, marine, forestry and production systems
2. Develop an energy mix towards zero carbon emissions
3. Transforming processes for a high performance, sustainable and digital industry
4. Develop new low-carbon mobility solutions that are efficient and secure
5. Accelerating synergies and innovation in the service of human and animal 5P medicine
6. Make Normandy a resilient territory by mastering technological, natural, health and social risks (emerging specialisation)

These 6 domains can include a Digital expertise. Digital has been indeed identified as an interdisciplinary axis within the Norman S3.

What is the MSCA Mobility Rule?

Applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in France for more than 12 months in the last three years before the call deadline.
For example, if you had an employment contract lasting 12 months and one day with an institution based in country A during the last three years, you cannot undertake a Fellowship in country A.

Can researchers of any nationality participate in WN Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme?

Researchers of any nationality can participate in the Programme.
In addition, it should be noted that there are EU restrictive measures (sanctions) in place which can prohibit the participation of and/or provision of technical training to

nationals and/or residents of certain countries in specific research fields. The beneficiaries are under an obligation to ensure compliance with these restrictive measures.
An overview thereof can be found under :
http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/sanctions/docs/measures_en.pdf

I have not yet obtained my PhD. How is the four years of full-time equivalent research experience calculated?

Only postgraduate research experience is relevant for this purpose. Other professional activities are not taken into account, no matter when these took place. Experience is calculated from the date when a researcher obtained the degree which would formally entitle him or her to embark on a doctorate. This may vary from country to country.

I have defended my thesis but I have not yet obtained my diploma. How can I complete my Application Form?

The Fellow should upload a certificate from his/her university certifying that the candidate has defended his/her thesis and will receive soon his diploma. The diploma should be asked then at the moment of the evaluation.

Is a Medical Doctor (MD) degree equivalent to a PhD?

In the context of Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, Medical Doctor (MD) studies are not taken as equivalent to PhD studies. For MDs, the requirement of 4 years of full-time research experience applies.

What is a supervisor?

The role of the supervisor(s) is to integrate the researcher properly within his/her organisation in order that all parties gain the maximum knowledge and skills from the fellowship. This includes ensuring that the foreseen training-through-research

takes place, as well as providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of the Fellow.
The Fellow may have several supervisors i.e. at the Host research unit where he will be recruited but also when applicable at the institution where he/she will carry out his/her secondment (in the non-academic sector or in another academic institution in the case of an international secondment).

Are secondments mandatory?

Secondments are not mandatory but they are strongly encouraged as they will participate in the development of the Fellows' skills. There are nonetheless limited to 3 months in total.

What is a mentor?

Mentors will give support, advice and guidance to the Fellow. They will bring a network and provide prospects for future employment. The mentors will be selected by the fellow in collaboration with the host supervisor. Mentors will be available in the institutions from the extra-academic sector to ensure intersectoral exposure of the Fellows. If a secondment is planned during the fellowship, the mentor can belong to the secondment organization or not.

Why should the Fellows not submit the proposal on his/her own without contacting a supervisor?

First, the research project should match the Host Institution's fields of research. The Fellow should check with the supervisor the feasibility of the project in terms of research, infrastructures…
Moreover, the legal responsibility lies with the Host Organisation and only the supervisor, appointed by his/her organisation, can act on its behalf until the signature of Agreement.

How are researchers evaluated?

Please refer to the Guide for Applicants.

Where can I find the list of the Host Institutions and non-academic institutions participating in the project?

Please refer to the Guide for Applicants or the corresponding section online.

Can I be recruited by a SME or a private partner?

No, only academic Host Institutions can recruit the Fellows. The SME, large companies… which are partner organisations in the project will only provide secondments, mentoring and training activities.

Can I choose another Host Institution that the ones mentioned in the list provided by the WN Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme?

Yes, you can choose another Host Institution as soon as this is an academic organisation which is located in Normandy and that your research project addresses one of the 6 S3 Norman domain.

How the Fellow’s salary is calculated?

According to the French regulation the living and mobility allowances are gross amounts, which are subject to social contributions. Consequently, the net salary results from deducting all compulsory withholdings such as employer contributions as well as employee contributions :

- The « coût total employeur » in French is the « gross salary ». It is the amount given by the Funding Organisation to the Host Institution that recruits the Fellow.

- The « salaire brut » (or « brut salary ») is the « gross salary » minus the employer contributions. This amount is generally mentioned on the employment contract.
- The « salaire net » (or « net salary ») corresponds to the « brut salary » minus the employee contributions.
- Employer and employee contributions vary every year.

As of January 2019, income tax is taken each month from the « net salary » before payment on salary’s bank account (around 10% of the monthly net salary). In France, the mobility allowance is exonerated from the income tax. The « net salary to be paid » is mentioned on the pay slip and represents what is actually paid on the bank account.