

DARA Information Meeting

PhD Fellowship Calls
Winter 2025/26

13:00-14:00, January 15, 2026



Agenda

Introduction to Danish Advanced Research Academy - DARA

PhD Fellowships available in the Winter 2025/26 calls

Structure of the Application

Evaluation Procedure

Q&A



Introduction to Danish Advanced Research Academy - DARA



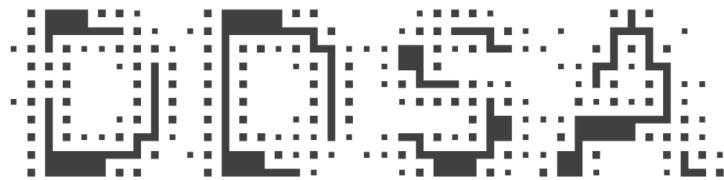
The academy idea is not new



Danish Diabetes and
Endocrine Academy



Danish
Cardiovascular
Academy



Danish
Data Science
Academy



The new kid on the Academy-block



DARA
Danish Advanced Research Academy

Differences compared to existing academies funded by Novo Nordisk Foundation

- DARA funds PhD students only
- Scientific scope is the natural, medical, and technical sciences, aligned with the strategic focus of the Novo Nordisk Foundation

The vision and mission of DARA

Vision

Position DARA as an international beacon within PhD training,
hatching excellent fellows capable of solving the challenges of tomorrow

Cutting-edge
Research

High-quality
Education

National &
International
Partnerships

PhD
Fellowships

Courses &
Networking

Mentorships

International
Research
Stays

Mission

Host an exceptional training environment for PhD students by
enabling forefront research, scientific education, and networking



PhD Fellowships available in the Winter 2025/26 calls



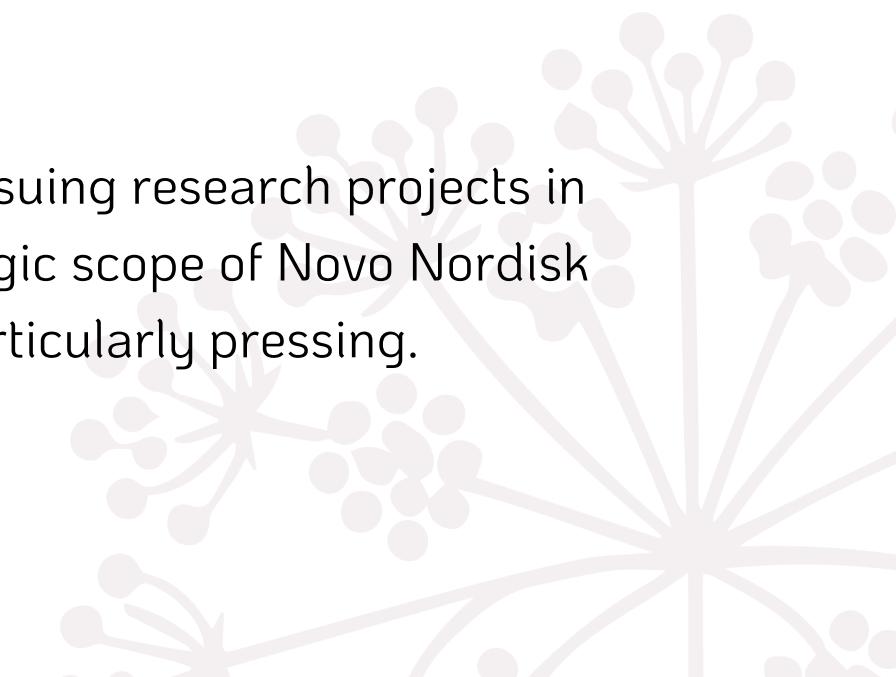
The two types of DARA Fellowships

Open Fellowships

The premise of the Open Fellowship is to fund projects challenging prevailing assumptions, probing new scientific directions, or pursuing creative hypothesis. An eligible project should encompass a transformative idea with the capacity to spark new directions within fundamental research areas covered by Novo Nordisk Foundation.

Thematic Fellowships

For Thematic Fellowships, funding will be awarded to fellows pursuing research projects in specific and predefined scientific themes, aligned with the strategic scope of Novo Nordisk Foundation, and within areas in which societal challenges are particularly pressing.



Open Fellowships – Winter 2025/26

The DARA Open Fellowships Call embraces proposals within *fundamental* areas of natural, medical, and technical sciences. Interdisciplinarity is welcomed but not required.

DARA will grant 19 fellowships with the Winter 2025/26 Open Fellowship call.

DARA operates with four overarching areas for our fellowships:

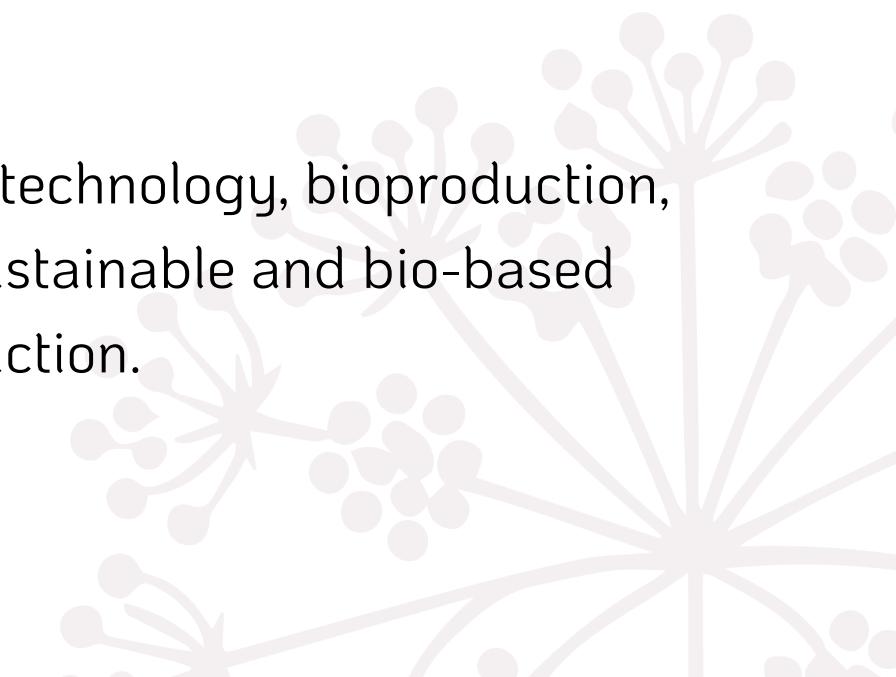
- **Bioscience & Biomedicine** - molecular biology, cell biology, bioinformatics, modelling of biological systems, enzymology, genetics, microbiology, pharmacology, experimental physiology, veterinarian medicine, biophysics, biochemistry, biology, biostatistics, etc.
- **Natural and Technical Sciences** - physics, chemistry, mathematics, nanotechnology, material sciences as well as technical sciences.

Open Fellowships – Winter 2025/26

- **Data & Computer Sciences** - development of new algorithms, methods and technologies within data science or computational science, artificial intelligence, statistics, bioinformatics, and other computational sciences, as well as application of data science and computational sciences to areas like life science, biomedical- and health science, public- and global health, infectious disease, sustainability, green transition, agriculture, as well as natural and technical sciences.

- **Biotechnology** - covering areas such as environmental biotechnology, bioproduction, synthetic biology, and bioprocess engineering as well as sustainable and bio-based methods in agriculture, industrial biotechnology and production.

Make sure to pick the best fitting!



Open Fellowships – Winter 2025/26

The following non-exhaustive list of research themes are not within the scope of the Open Fellowship call:

- Projects within social sciences or humanities
- Marine and ocean-related research
- Cosmology
- Zoology
- Psychiatry and psychology
- Exclusively clinical focus in e.g. clinical trials
- Urban planning, housing, engineering, and architecture
- Research on livestock and livestock derivatives
- Aquaculture and derived commodities
- Projects with primary focus on the use of data and computer science within finance, insurance, fraud detection, advertisement, commercial analysis, telecommunication, mass surveillance, defence, cyber security, gaming, and similar
- Projects with a retrospective focus or of historical value
- Didactic research in science education and science communication

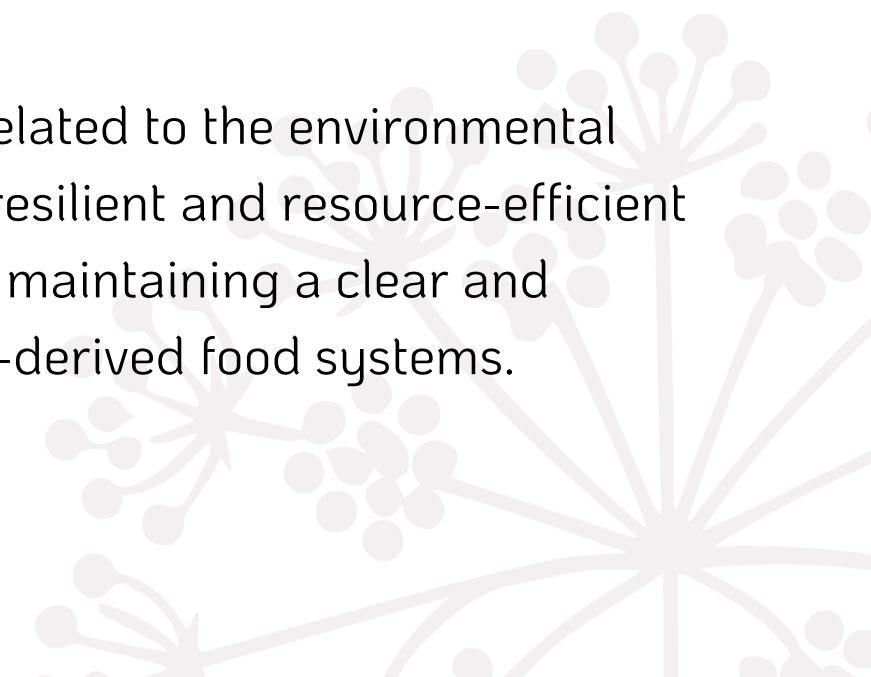
AgriFood Fellowships – Winter 2025/26

The AgriFood PhD programme seeks to promote the development of a plant-based food value chain by encouraging interdisciplinary research and innovation at the cross-roads of agricultural and food sciences.

DARA will grant 4 fellowships with the Winter 2025/26 AgriFood Fellowship call.

Specification of the Winter 2025/26 AgriFood Fellowship call :

DARA invites research proposals that address major challenges related to the environmental footprint of plant-based food production and the development of resilient and resource-efficient food value chains. Projects should be fundamental in nature while maintaining a clear and strategic focus on advancing climate-smart and sustainable plant-derived food systems.



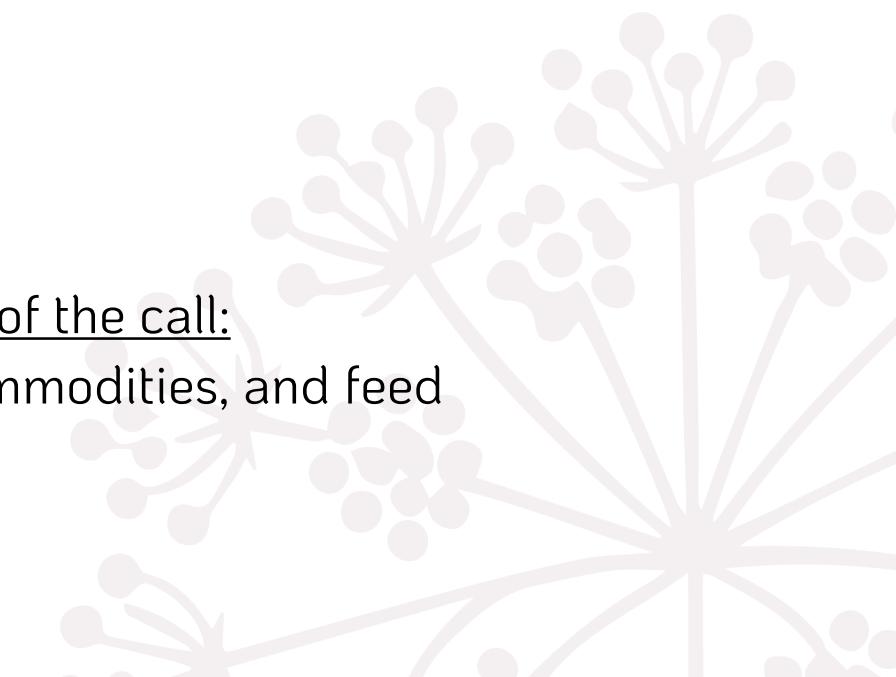
AgriFood Fellowships – Winter 2025/26

Non-exclusive list of research areas covered by the call:

- Life Cycle and Carbon Footprint Analysis
- Resource-Use and Nutrient Efficiency
- Preservation of Relevant Ecosystems and Biodiversity
- Circular and Climate-Resilient Value Chains
- Technological and Data-Driven Solutions

The following non-exclusive list of areas are not within the scope of the call:

- Research primarily focusing on livestock, livestock-derived commodities, and feed
- Research focusing on aquaculture, or its derived commodities

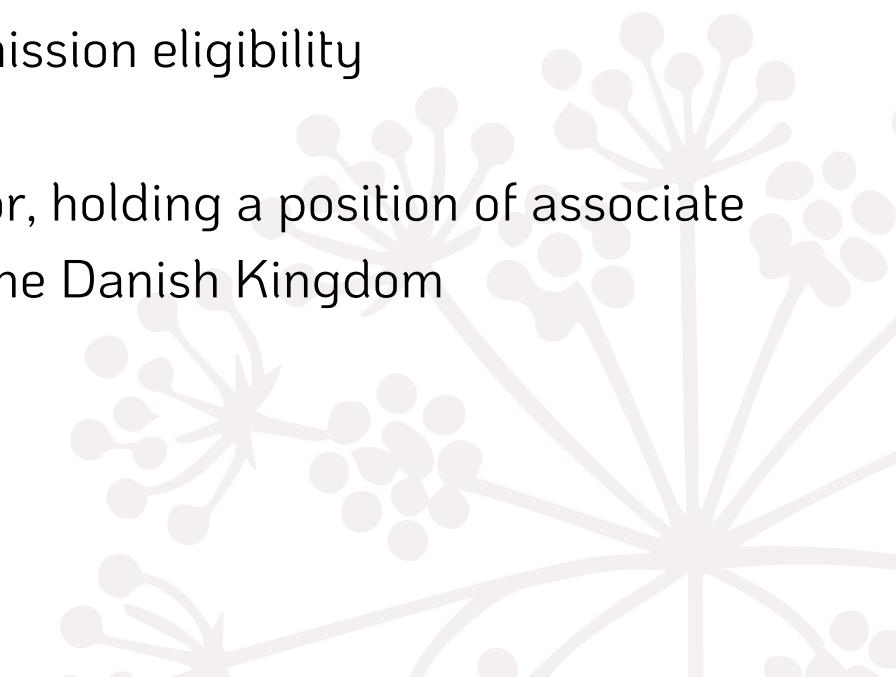


Joint rules - Eligibility

The DARA PhD Fellowships are open to all qualified candidates irrespective of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, nationality, or religion, in keeping with DARA's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive research community and to attract global talent.

Eligibility criteria:

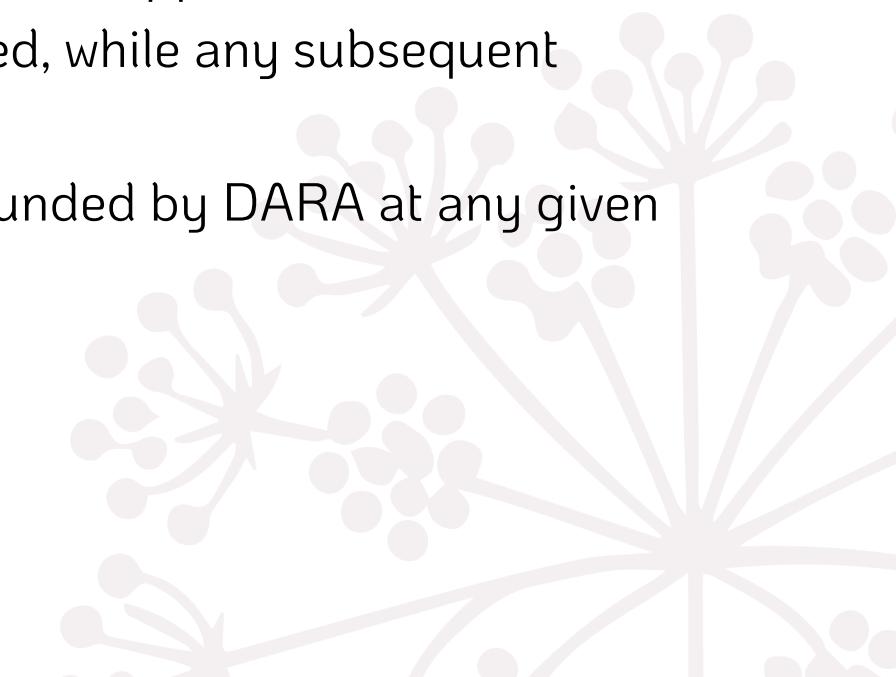
- Applicants must be qualified for admission to a PhD program in Denmark under either the 5+3 model or the 4+4 model. The host institution warrants the admission eligibility
- Candidates must have an agreement with a principal supervisor, holding a position of associate professor, professor, or equivalent at a research institution in the Danish Kingdom



Joint rules - Eligibility

The following restrictions apply to the applicant and the principal supervisor.

- Applicants can apply for only one call in each round and with one application only
- Applicants can submit up to three applications across DARA's calls in total
- The fellowship cannot have started their PhD study at the time of applying
- A supervisor can only act as principal supervisor for one applicant in each round; even if multiple calls are open in the same round. If a principal supervisor supports more than one application, only the first application submitted will be evaluated, while any subsequent applications will receive an administrative rejection
- Principal supervisor may hold only one active PhD fellowship funded by DARA at any given time. This limitation does not apply to co-supervisors.



Joint rules - Funding

All DARA fellowships are 80% funded. The host must cover the remaining 20% of the fellowship costs

A fellowship in the Winter 2025/26 call covers

Salary:

Up to 1,260,000 DKK to cover the PhD fellow's salary for the duration of the PhD appointment (according to standard Danish PhD employment terms).

Tuition Fee:

Up to 190,000 DKK to cover PhD enrolment fees at the host institution.

Indirect costs:

For Danish Universities:

Each fellowship includes a project supplement of 600,000 DKK

Research institutions not part of the agreement on the project supplement:

- Up to 230,000 DKK in bench fee
- Up to 5% of the total budget for administrative support.

You must use the budget template provided by DARA, fill in and upload in PDF-format.



Structure of the Application



Submission of applications

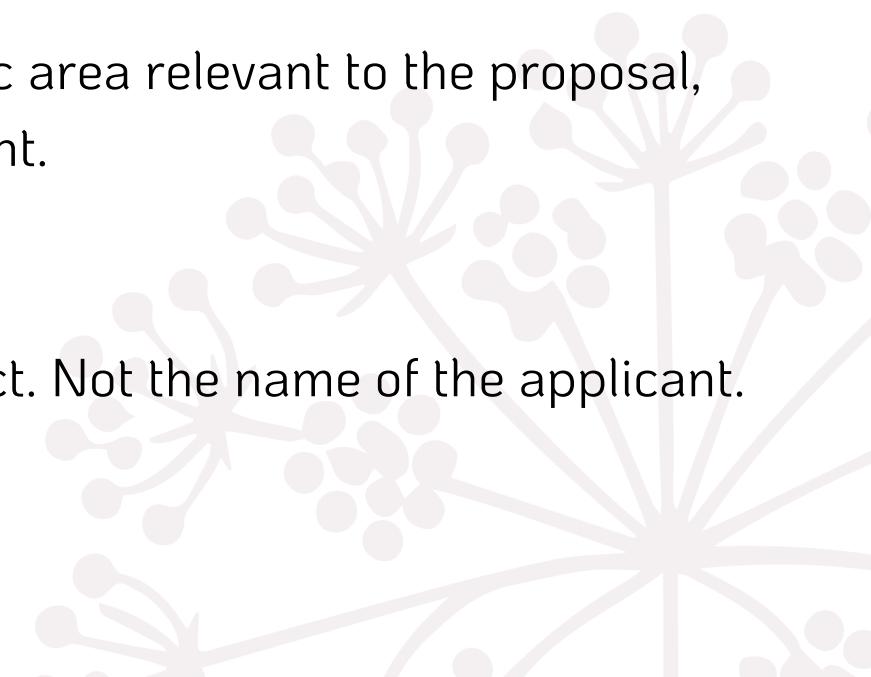
All applications must be submitted through the DARA online application portal. Applicants will need to create an account and fill out the online form as well as upload required material. The applicant is expected to play a significant role in the project development and application writing.

Please note that for a proposal to be eligible, it is also mandatory for the principal supervisor to upload documents in the portal upon invitation by the applicant.

Upon submission, the applicant must choose the primary scientific area relevant to the proposal, with the option to indicate one additional secondary area if relevant.

Also, you must choose keywords best reflecting your research.

The title of the proposal should be the title of your research project. Not the name of the applicant.



Required materials

Summary of Research (up to 1,500 characters, including spaces)

Provide a concise summary of the proposed PhD project in layman's terms.

Project Description (up to 12,500 characters, including spaces)

The project description must address the following:

- Scientific background and state-of-the-art
- Research objectives
- Methodology (including any experimental or analytical approaches with mile-stones and deliverables)

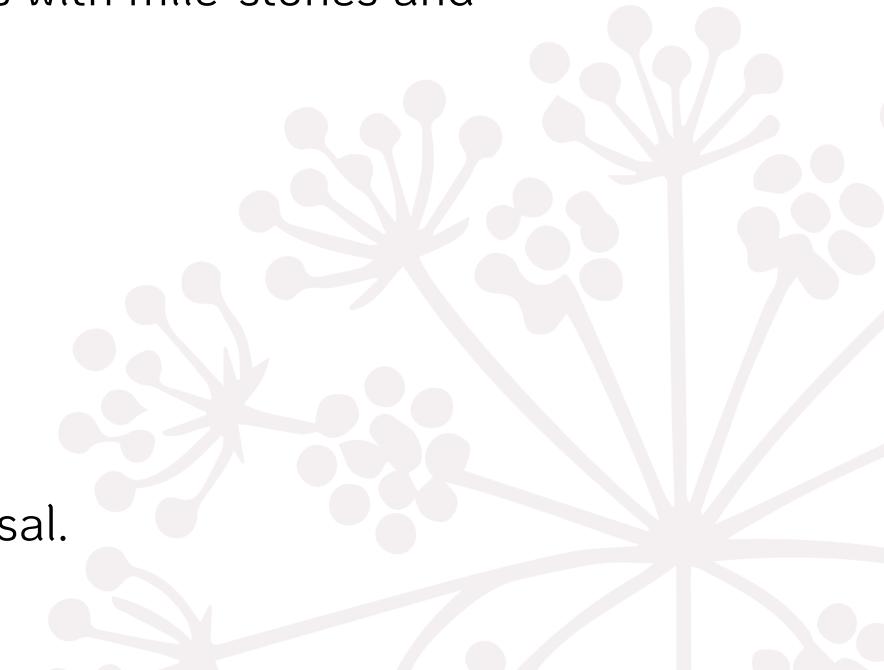
Do not paste illustrations into the Project Description

References

List of scientific literature cited in the Project Description.

Illustrations (optional) - uploaded

It is possible to include a maximum of 3 illustrations with each proposal.



Required materials

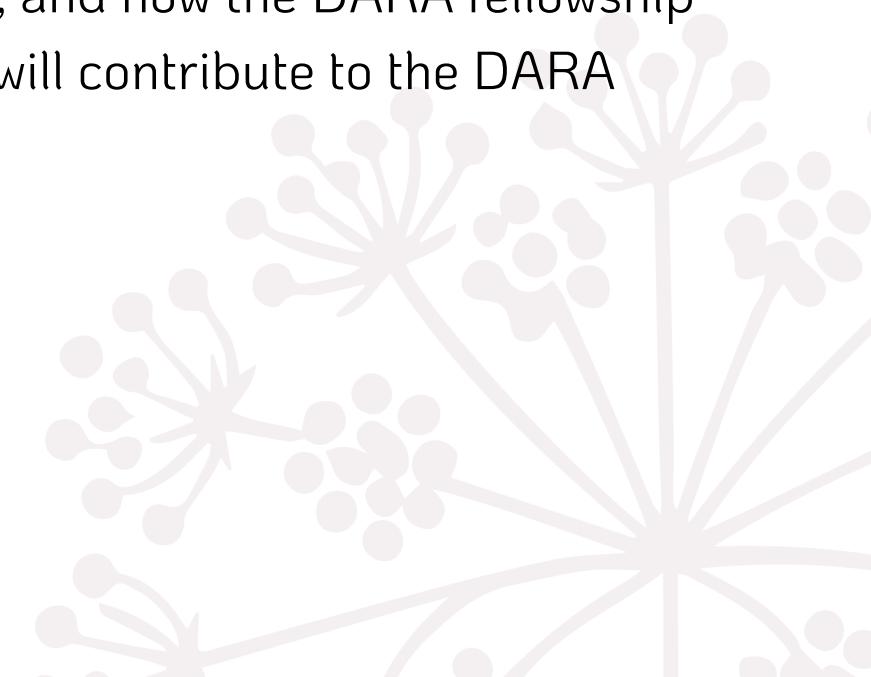
Scientific and Potential Societal Impact (up to 1,000 characters, including spaces)

Research Environment Description (up to 2,000 characters, including spaces)

The description should outline the feasibility of the project.

Motivation Letter (up to 3,000 characters, including spaces)

Describe your aspirations for this exact research, doctoral project, and how the DARA fellowship will contribute to your career development. Also, explain how you will contribute to the DARA community.

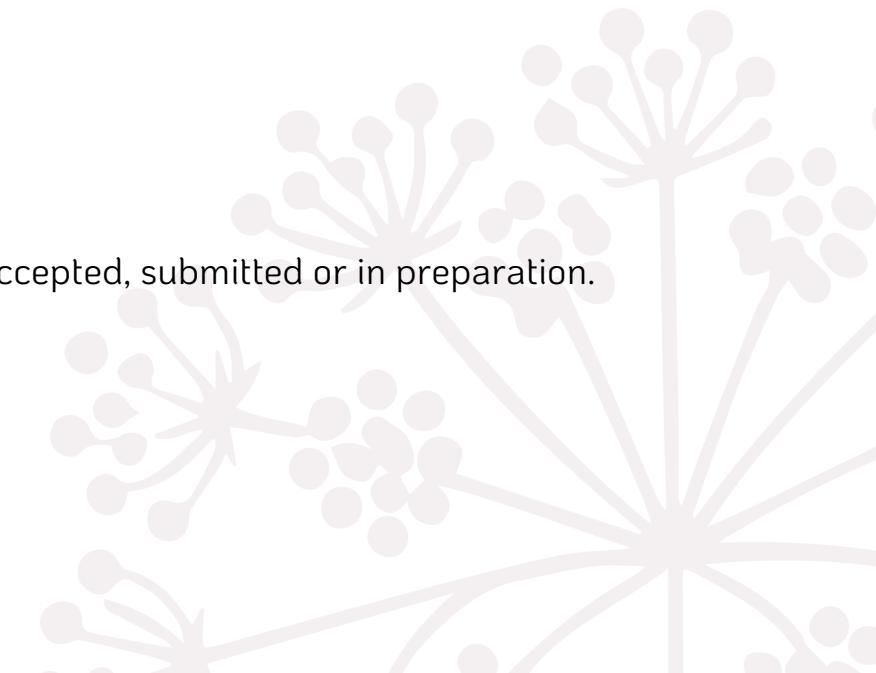


Required materials

CV of the Applicant (up to 5,000 characters, including spaces)

The CV must adhere to the following structure:

- Education
 - List in what, where and when you got your bachelor and – if graduated – your master's degree. Include your Grade Point Average (GPA) as well as the maximum possible GPA at your institution, where possible. Also, include the grade of your bachelor and – if applicable – your master's thesis.
 - Mention distinctions achieved during your education.
- Relevant professional experience
 - Any employments of relevance to the proposed research project or your career.
- Skills
 - Attained skills relevant to the methodologies in the research project.
- Publications and/or conference abstracts
 - If applicable, list your scientific outputs. Clearly state if publications are published, accepted, submitted or in preparation.
- Awards and honours
- Other relevant achievements



Required materials for upload

Academic Transcripts

Upload official transcripts for your bachelor's and master's degrees (or equivalent). Transcripts should preferably include a concise description of the grading standard used and a conversion of grades into the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) grading scale.

Budget – in pdf-format

Hosting Letter

Official letter of endorsement provided by the hosting institute/department and signed by the head of department. The letter should confirm that

- the remaining 20% of the fellowship's costs is guaranteed by the department
- the candidate is eligible for admission to a PhD study at the host institution

CV of International Mentor (optional)

Additional uploads



Required materials for upload – by the principal supervisor

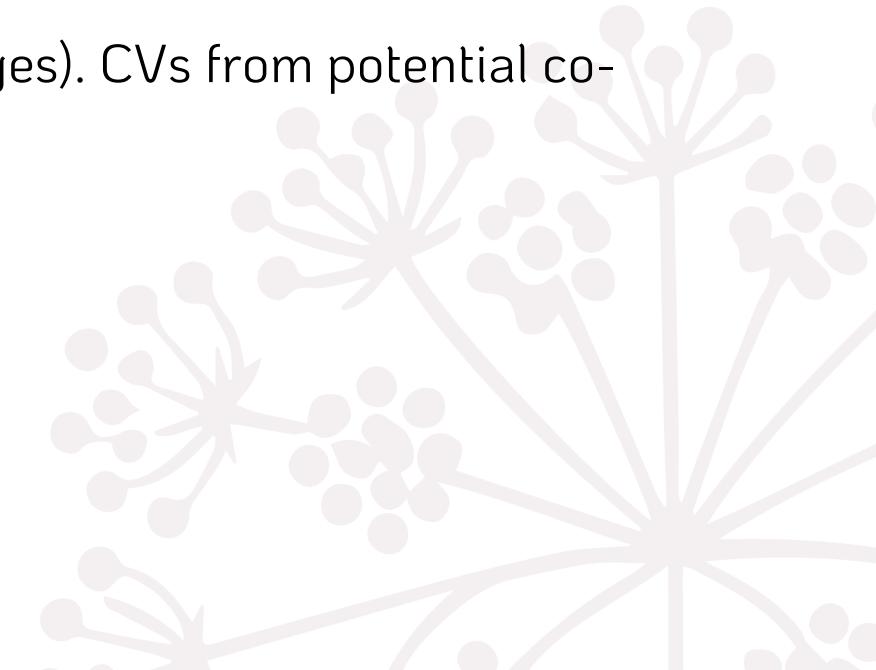
Principal supervisor Support Letter

The principal supervisor (associate professor, professor, or equivalent) must provide a letter endorsing the project. This letter should outline the supervisor's role, available resources, and alignment between the proposed research and the hosting environment.

The letter should remain concise (maximum 2 pages).

Short CV of the principal supervisor

The principal supervisor must upload a short CV (maximum 2 pages). CVs from potential co-supervisors are not required.



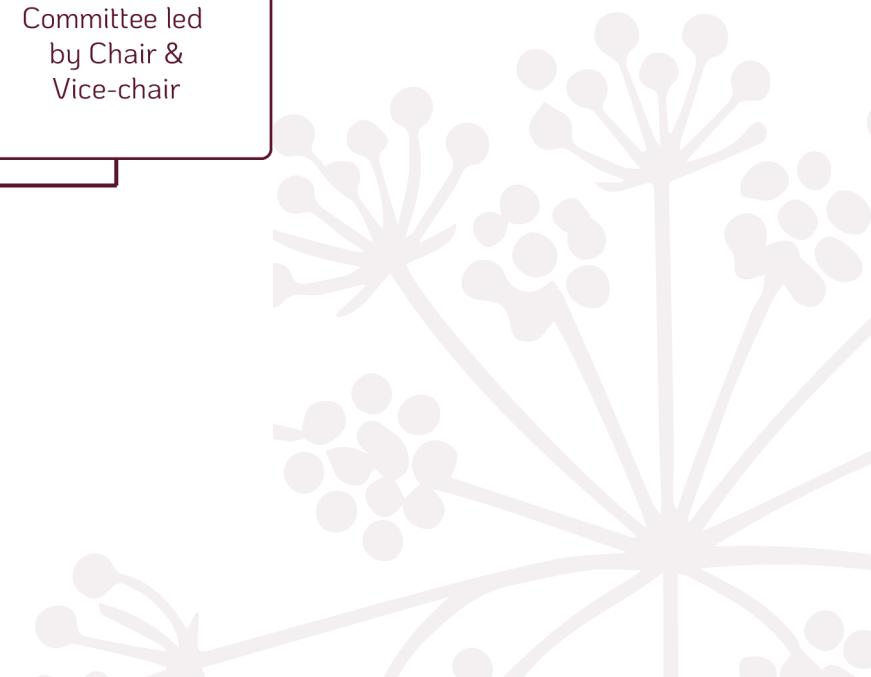
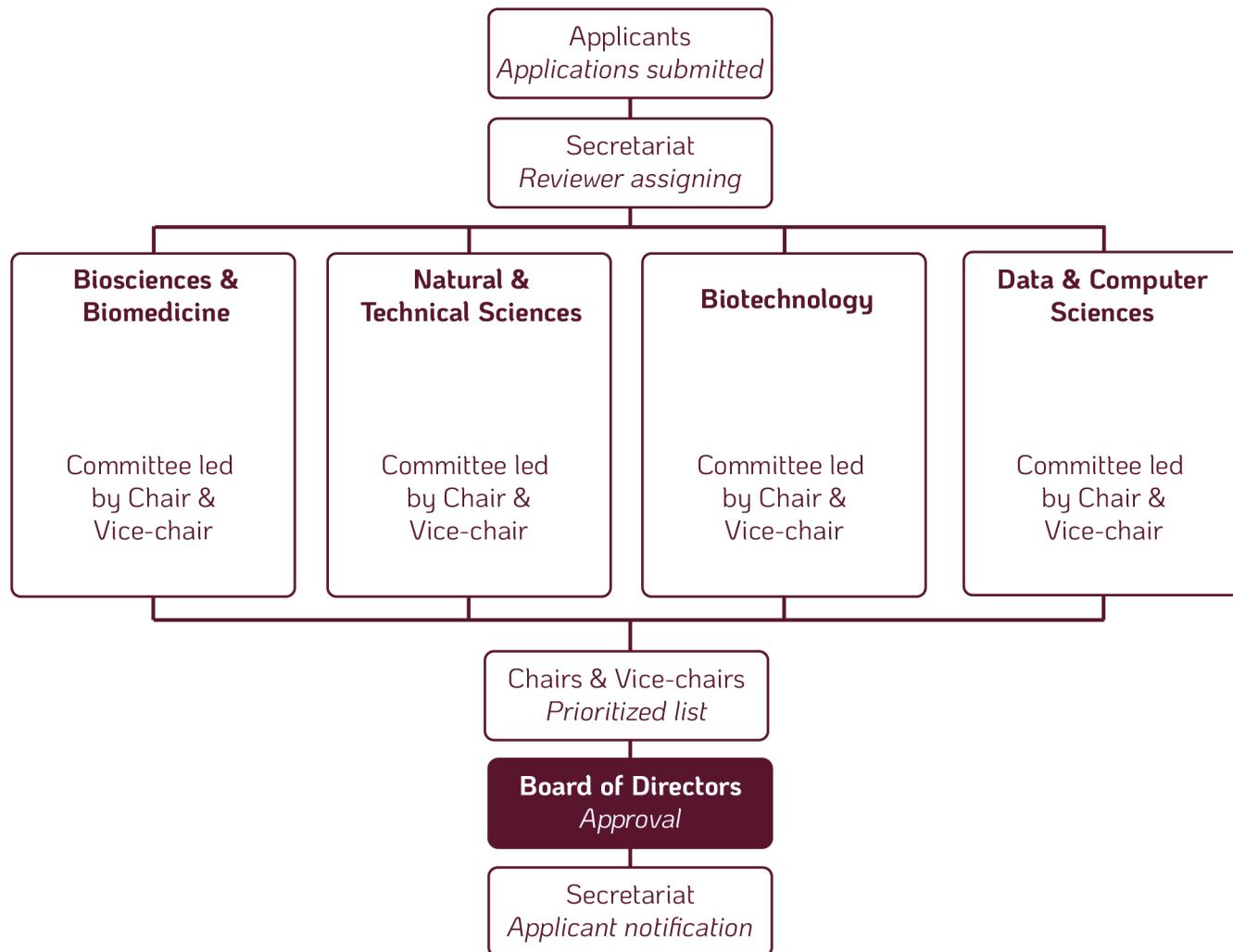
Start early on your submission!



Evaluation Procedure

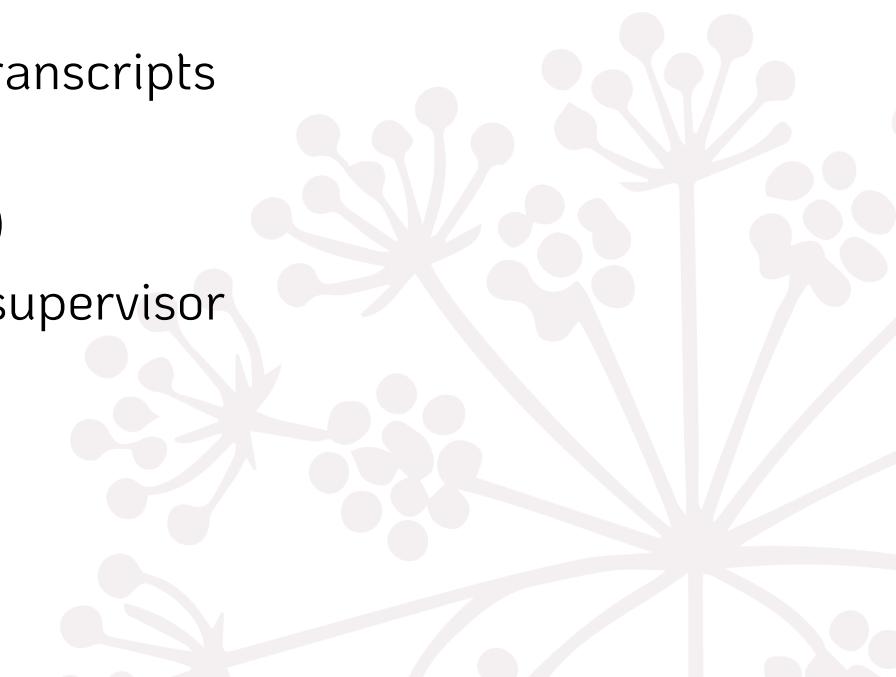


Agenda



The administrative check

- Research project is out of scope for the call and/or the Novo Nordisk Foundation
- Missing letter of support and/or CV from the principal supervisor
- Missing academic transcripts
- Missing mandatory sections of the proposal
- Missing letter of endorsement by Head of Department (or equivalent)
- Missing statement on co-funding in place by either supervisor or Head of Department
- Missing budget
- CV does not adhere to the guidelines or GPA does not match transcripts
- Start date does not fit within the time frame allowed by DARA
- The supervisor is not associate professor, professor (or similar)
- More than one application submitted from the same principal supervisor
- The principal supervisor has an active DARA fellowship



The scientific evaluation

Eligible applications will be assessed by specific fellowship committees, each comprised of international experts, covering DARA's scientific scope. Applications are assigned to three international experts, possessing relevant knowledge.

Reviewers are selected to provide balanced coverage of the scientific disciplines reflected in the proposal. Reviewers assess the proposals independently, focusing on the main criteria described below.

Excellence of the Candidate – weighed 33%

Quality, Novelty, Feasibility, and Impact of the Research Project – weighed 67%

Note that all reviewers may not have in-depth knowledge of your research field.



Points highlighted by international reviewers

Dedication

The reviewers appreciated it when they could sense the applicant's dedication, e.g. in the motivation letter and the project description.

Feasibility

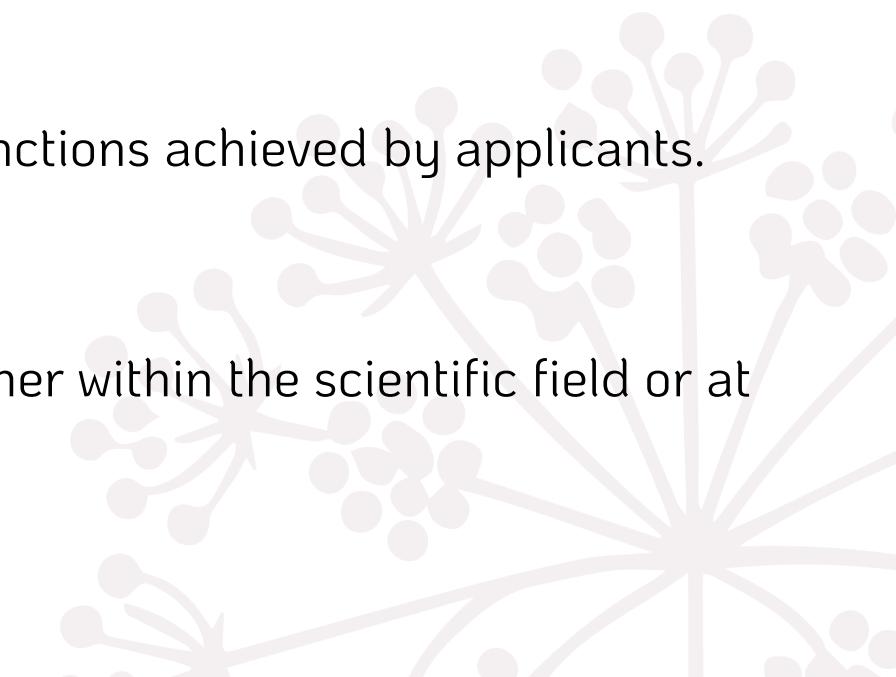
The reviewers assessed how realistic a project was, and whether it was over- or under-ambitious.

Grades

The reviewers placed emphasis on strong grades or special distinctions achieved by applicants.

Impact

The reviewers appreciated a clear and well-defined impact, whether within the scientific field or at a societal level.



Points highlighted by international reviewers

Non-scientific activity

The reviewers valued it when applicants had taken on tasks or held positions that complemented their scientific work.

Project

The reviewers valued quality and innovativeness of the projects rather than “more of the same.”

Publications

The reviewers considered it as positive if a candidate had publications, but there was also agreement that:

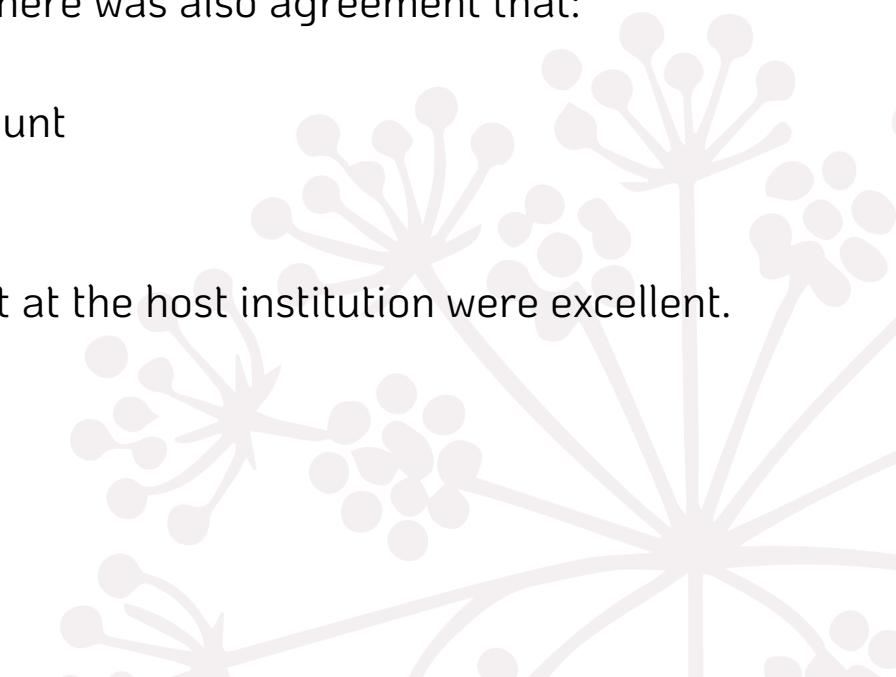
- applicants are early in their careers
- publication traditions vary across fields, and this should be taken into account

Supervisor

The reviewers valued applications where the supervisor and the environment at the host institution were excellent.

Supervisor support

The reviewers appreciated clear and strong support from the supervisor.



Important dates

Application deadline

20th of February 2026, at 2 pm (CET)

Notification

Expected June 2026

Earliest start date

1st of August 2026

Latest start date

1st of November 2026



Q & A

