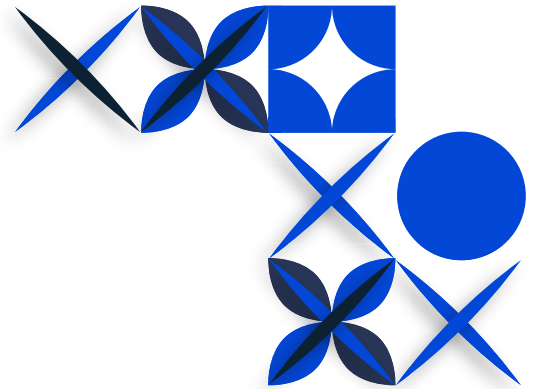


MIGRATION x DIASPORA x CITIZENSHIP



# Guide for Applicants

MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS (MSCA)  
COFUND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Please read this document carefully before submitting your application.  
Disclaimer: This guide has no legal value in itself.  
The information it contains cannot be used as a basis for appeal.

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## 1. UNIVERSITY OF MÜNSTER

Münster is a vibrant city located in the northwest of Germany. Known as Germany's bicycle capital, it offers historic architecture around the city centre, recreational spaces near the canal or the Aasee, excellent infrastructure, and a thriving cultural scene. With more than 43,000 students, the University of Münster is one of the largest universities in Germany. The University's diverse selection of degree programmes, its broad research portfolio, and the high quality of life in Münster, reflected in the University's motto "living.knowledge," have made it appealing to both German and international students and scholars. The COFUND Postdoctoral Programme "Migration, Diaspora, Citizenship" helps to further internationalise postdoctoral research and training in the social sciences and humanities as well as strengthen their interdisciplinarity and intersectoral dimensions.

## 2. COFUND "MIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, DIASPORA"

Our globalized world is shaped by international mass migration. In the twenty-first century, the forces behind population movements are stronger than ever, and migration itself is a key driver of social, cultural, and political change, including, above all, the proliferation of diaspora communities and new modes of citizenship. By focusing on these interconnected phenomena, the COFUND Postdoctoral Programme "Migration, Diaspora, Citizenship" opens up research opportunities for postdoctoral scholars with a wide range of academic interests and backgrounds, who will become part of an innovative international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral 'network of networks' based at the University of Münster, Germany. While the increasing diversification of migration, diaspora, and citizenship research brings great opportunities, it also entails the risk of topical, theoretical, and methodological fragmentation, which gets in the way of tackling complex and urgent research problems resulting from human mobility and displacement. The MDC project aims to tackle these challenges by enabling and further promoting interdisciplinary research between academic and non-academic partners, with scholars from all over the world and across different career stages. As such, the university's different departments work together, thereby connecting a wide range of subjects and fostering the collaboration between them. Furthermore, the project has seventeen worldwide associated partners, all of which provide ample possibilities for national and international networking and cooperation.

Participating Schools and Faculties:

- Business and Economics
- Educational and Social Sciences
- Geoscience
- History/Philosophy
- Law
- Music
- Philology
- Psychology/Sport and Exercise Science
- Theology

For further information on the participating schools and faculties, please see the University's [website](#).

### 3. FELLOWSHIPS

Throughout the project's duration from 2024 to 2029, a total number of seventeen outstanding postdoctoral fellows will come to Münster from around the world.

As a fellow in the project, you will

- get the chance to pursue your own research project and further your career development;
- work in a close-knit and well-structured research environment;
- have the opportunity to go on secondments to a global network of partnerships with a wide range of academic profiles, thus providing not only specific opportunities for collaboration and further networking but also attractive possibilities for non-academic secondments, thereby bringing in practical expertise and a variety of career pathways.

By combining 'training through research' on the one hand, and focused skills development on the other, we aim to ensure genuine interdisciplinary and intersectoral exchange and collaboration. Depending on your project, you will participate in an individualized MDC Training Programme, which consists of regular research colloquiums, the organisation of lectures and workshops, and courses on transferable skills such as citizen science, management, 'idea mining,' and others.

#### 3.1 TYPES OF FELLOWSHIPS

The programme offers two types of fellowships:

##### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

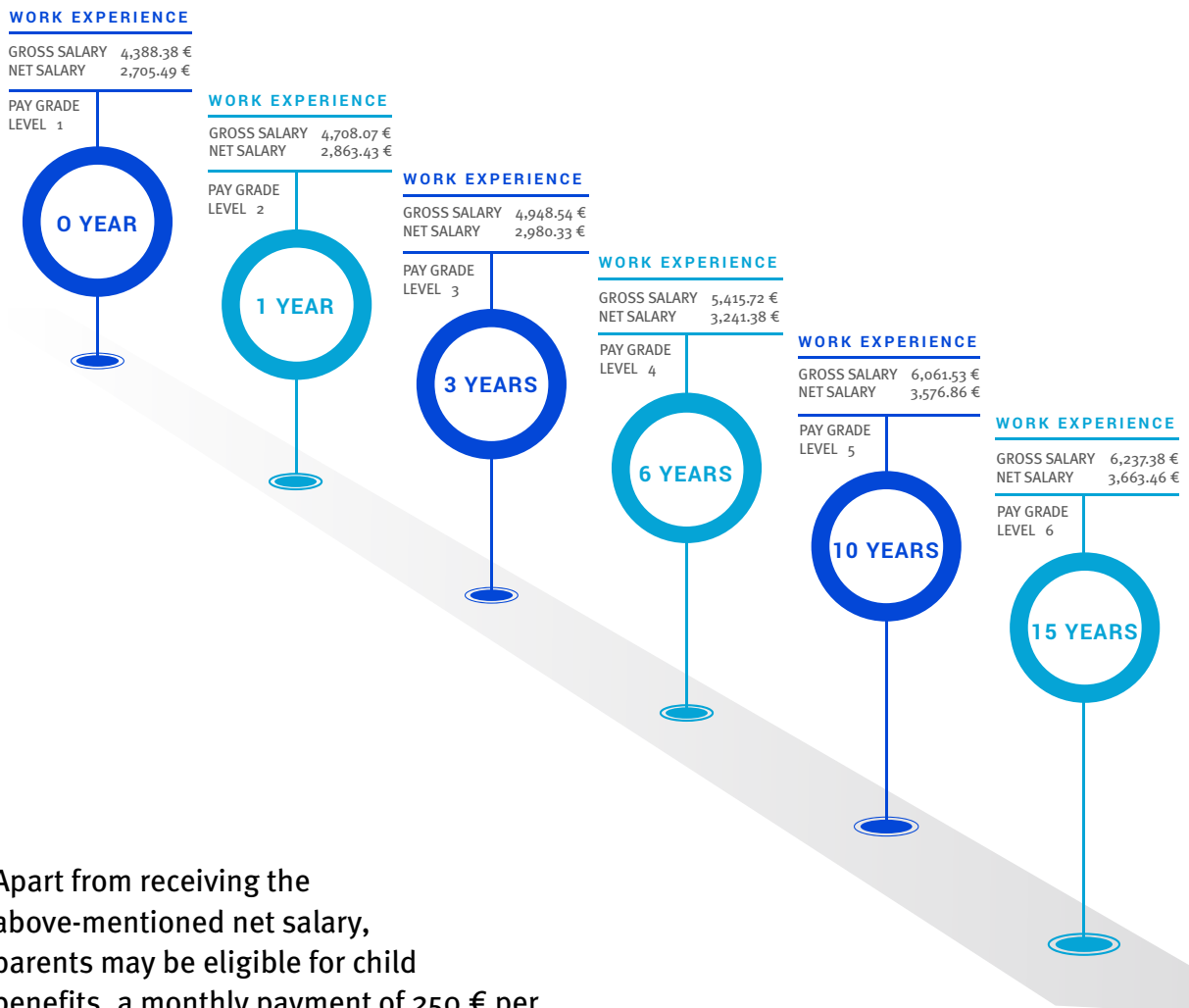
- aimed at early-career postdocs with no or up to six years of research experience after receipt of their PhD degree
- duration: 24 months
- start dates: 1 May 2025, 2026, and 2027

##### SENIOR FELLOWSHIP

- experienced postdocs with more than six years of research experience after receipt of their PhD degree
- duration: 6 months
- start dates: 1 May 2025, 2026, 2027 and 2028

All fellows will be offered a full employment contract during the tenure, according to the employment conditions of public service in North-Rhine Westphalia. This includes full social security, health insurance, and other benefits. The fellowships are also endowed with funds for traveling, organising academic and intersectoral events, and inviting guest speakers to Münster. Even after their tenure, they will retain their alumni fellow status and thus be fully integrated in the MDC network, including funds for attending annual project days.

The living allowance is based on the pay scale TV-L E13. Each scale has several pay grade levels that depend on prior work experience in Research and Innovation (see table 1). Moreover, fellows who are employed in the month of December will receive an end-of-year bonus of approximately 50% of their current (average) salary.



Apart from receiving the above-mentioned net salary, parents may be eligible for child benefits, a monthly payment of 250 € per child plus tax reduction, and married fellows enjoy considerable tax advantages if their spouse does not have any or a very low income in Germany.

Table 1: TV-L E13 Salary<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Disclaimer: These numbers are only estimates, which is, for instance, due to individual health care and social security contribution, but also due to biannual salary negotiations between the unions and the public sector employer.

### 3.2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND CRITERIA

#### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

**1. Compliance with the MSCA Mobility Rule:**

Applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Germany for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately prior to the programme's call deadline.

**2. Completed PhD degree at the deadline of the co-funded programme's call:**

Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet been formally awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered as postdoctoral researchers and are eligible to apply; the successful defence must be unconditional (no further requirements/corrections that need to be addressed) and take place before the call deadline; supporting documentation may be requested.

#### ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR EACH TYPE OF FELLOWSHIP

##### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

1. **Publications:** 1 monograph or 3 major articles, especially in migration, diaspora, and citizenship studies
2. **Project experience:** involvement in projects (especially ongoing projects in migration, diaspora, and citizenship studies) is expected, even if not in a leading position (Principal Investigator or similar)
3. **Networks:** connection to an international network is expected
4. **Further pertinent merits** (prizes, honours, distinctions, intersectoral expertise): bonus, but not required

##### SENIOR FELLOWS

1. **Publications:** a) 1 monograph or 3 major articles, as well as b) 3 further publications, especially in migration, diaspora, and citizenship studies
2. **Project experience:** extensive project experience, especially in migration, diaspora, and citizenship studies is expected (PI or similar); ongoing projects should be pertinent to the MDC **programme**
3. **Networks:** active, multiple memberships in international networks is vital
4. **Further pertinent merits** (prizes, honours, distinctions, intersectoral expertise): one further distinction and/or intersectoral experience is expected

### **3.3 RESEARCH PROJECT AND CORE RESEARCH TEAM**

For each fellow in the MDC programme, we will form a Core Research Team (CRT) that provides support in academic and non-academic career building and which helps you strengthen the interdisciplinary and/or intersectoral dimension of your individual research project. You will be matched with three experts with whom you will work together closely:

1. an expert with considerable proficiency in your field of research for **indepth** advice on the project;
2. an expert from another discipline who brings in new methodological and conceptual perspectives;
3. a third member who is non-academic and could either come from the project's Advisory Board or from one of the non-academic partners in the MDC network. This expert is in charge of giving support on the intersectoral aspects of your project and for exploring your non-academic career development options.

The matching with your Core Research Team starts upon your acceptance of the fellowship, but you are invited to make suggestions for your respective Core Research Team in your application. Furthermore, you are welcome to invite a doctoral student from the University of Münster's smartNETWORK, who is working on a PhD within a pertinent field, to join your Core Research Team. This collaboration aims to bring researchers at different career stages together.

### **3.4 CAREER COUNCIL AND PERSONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Every fellow in the MDC will be supported and monitored by the Career Council, which is constituted by the University of Münster's manifold career specialists, such as the Vice-Rector for Career Development and Diversity, the Career Service, the Münster Centre for Emerging Researchers (CERes), and the REACH Start-Up Centre. The Career Council will support and advise you, alongside your supervisors from your Core Research Team, in developing an individualised Personal Career Development Plan.

### **3.5 TRAINING PROGRAMME**

The MDC Training Programme consists of two parts: training-through-research and transferable skills training.



### 3.5.1 RESEARCH

Next to your Core Research Team, research in the MDC Project will be organised in a combination of collaborative formats:

- **MDC Colloquium:** During the semester, the MDC Colloquium will meet every three weeks, alternating with the MDC Lecture and MDC Brown Bag Forum. It gives you the opportunity to present and discuss your work-in-progress in an interdisciplinary setting and is also open to all doctoral students and faculty of the MDC departments.
- **MDC Lecture Series:** The MDC Lecture Series consists of public lectures organised by your cohort. As a fellow, you may invite guest lecturers, who can be current or alumni MDC fellows, or other academic or non-academic speakers, and initiate and moderate discussions afterwards. All lectures will be streamed online and archived on the MDC website.
- **MDC Brown Bag Forum:** Every three weeks at lunchtime, the MDC Brown Bag Forum will meet to give you, your cohort, and other members of the participating departments the opportunity to discuss general research-related issues and challenges in an informal setting.
- **MDC Methods Labs:** This monthly interdisciplinary forum explores general methodological approaches in and across the social sciences and humanities, with a special focus on their combination in interdisciplinary research settings in migration, diaspora, and citizenship studies.
- **MDC Workshops:** During your time in Münster, you will get the chance to organise a workshop within your specific area, to which you can invite one or, in the case of postdoctoral fellows, up to three international academic and non-academic guest speakers. MDC workshops are open to all (alumni) fellows and members of the MDC departments.
- **MDC Roundtable:** The MDC Roundtable is an annual public event where you and all fellows, affiliated scholars, and guests discuss current social, cultural, and political issues and their implications for migration, diaspora, and citizenship research. You are expected to get involved in the organisation of the event, which will also be streamed and archived online.
- **MDC Project Day:** This is an annual event to which you and all current and alumni fellows, the Advisory Board, and members of the MDC departments are invited. As a current fellow, you can report on your research progress; alumni fellows will report on further research carried out in the network; and you may invite keynote speakers.

### **3.5.2 TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

Based on your Personal Career Development Plan, the supervisors and the Career Council will help you develop an individual training plan that suits your career goals. You will have the opportunity to participate in the following transferable skills courses:

- “Behind the Scenes: Understanding German Research Institutions”
- “Idea Mining,” which teaches creative problem-solving skills, encouraging participants to think ‘outside the box’

In addition, postdoc fellows are expected to participate in at least two, senior fellows in at least one of the following courses:

- “Citizen Science”
- “Science Communication”
- “Policy Papers and Policy Briefs”
- “Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity Management”
- “IPR Management”
- “From Science to Start-Up”
- “Sustainable Research Management and Environmental Awareness”

### **3.6 EU SPECIAL NEEDS FUND FOR ELIGIBLE RESEARCHERS**

As a Marie Skłodowska–Curie Actions beneficiary, it is particularly important for the MDC to prioritize physical accessibility and inclusion of researchers. The EU offers financial assistance for any additional expenses (e.g., special needs items or services) of employed researchers with lasting physical, psychological, intellectual, or sensory impairments, enabling them to fully participate in MSCA programmes when otherwise unable due to these barriers.

### **3.7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECONDMENTS**

The MDC network currently includes 17 academic and non-academic partners, who form a large international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral ‘network of networks’ that spans all continents. Each of these distinguished associated partners is committed to contributing to the research and training programme and to hosting MDC fellows at their premises during secondments, which are mandatory for early-career postdoc fellows and optional for senior fellows. Fellows are encouraged to choose an associated partner according to their own individual research focus and training needs, either from the existing network or from new partnerships they identify as being useful and which they help to acquire.

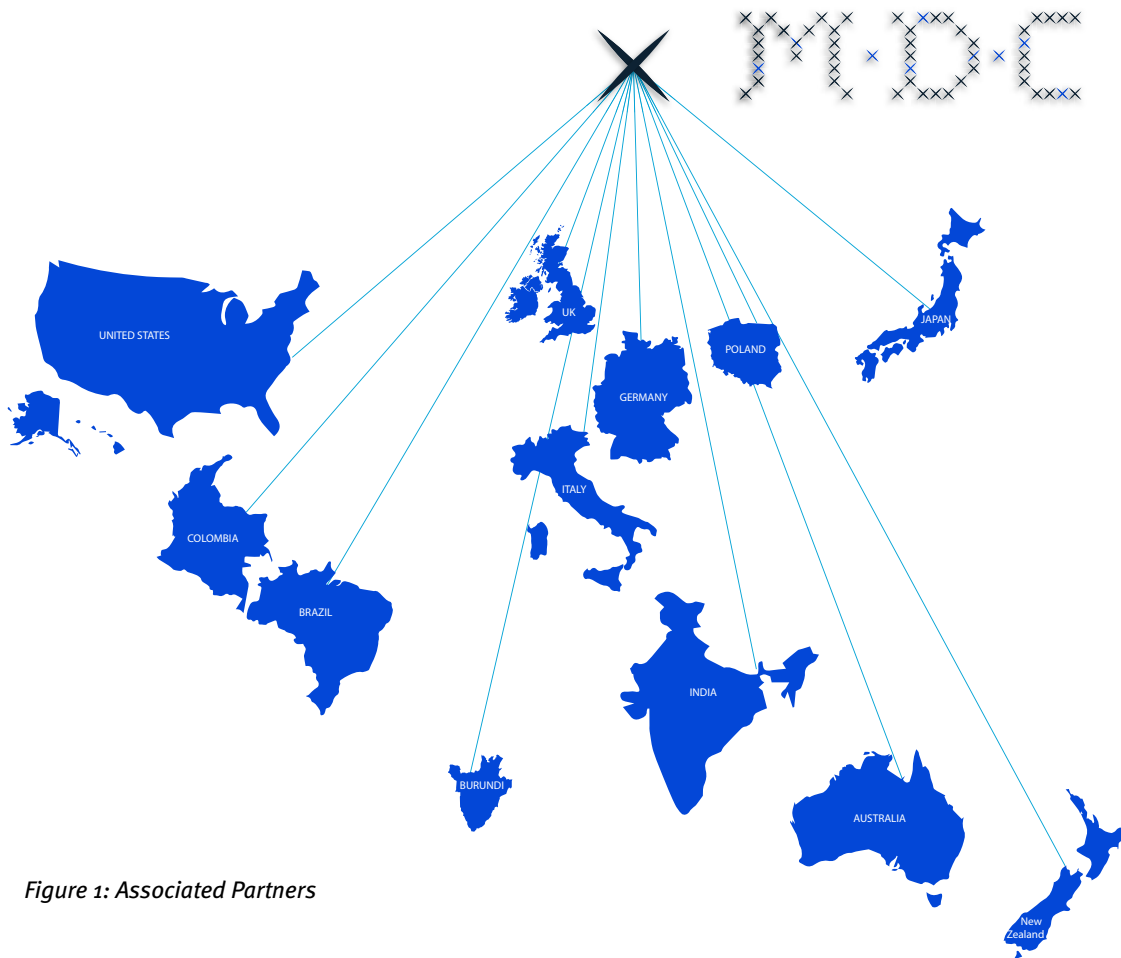


Figure 1: Associated Partners

The total duration of secondments to associated partners will be limited to a maximum of 25% of the fellowship duration, i.e. 6 months for postdoc fellows and 6 weeks for senior fellows. The available time frames for secondments will be relatively fixed so as to ensure that joint activities and events in Münster can be attended by the entire current cohort of fellows.

### 3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Research within the COFUND will comply with the highest ethical standards according to international, EU, and German law. The programme will not provide funding for any projects that involve human cloning for reproduction, modification of human genetics that can be inherited, creation of human embryos specifically for research or stem cell extraction, or use of somatic cell nuclear transfer for these purposes. As part of the application process, each candidate must include an Ethical Issues Form (a template can be found on the MDC website). If any ethical issues have been identified, candidates must also provide an Ethics Self-Assessment and Strategy along with their declaration.

Any open question or concerns will be addressed during the interview (see 4.2).

## 4. HOW TO APPLY

### 4.1 WHAT TO SUBMIT

Contact Information

CV (including information about career breaks)

Copy of PhD certificate

Names of two referees

Mobility statement (in conformity with MSCA mobility rule)

List of publications (highlight pertinent publications as per fellowship type in 3.3)

Project description consisting of...

- working title

- key words

- 300-word summary

- 2,000-word detailed project description

- research plan with start date, timeline,  
projected activities (workshop, secondments, etc.)

- dissemination plan, incl. public scholarship strategies

Statement on previous collaborative projects (interdisciplinary co-authorships, networks, etc.) and specific collaborative benefits of the planned research in Münster

Plans for workshop organisation

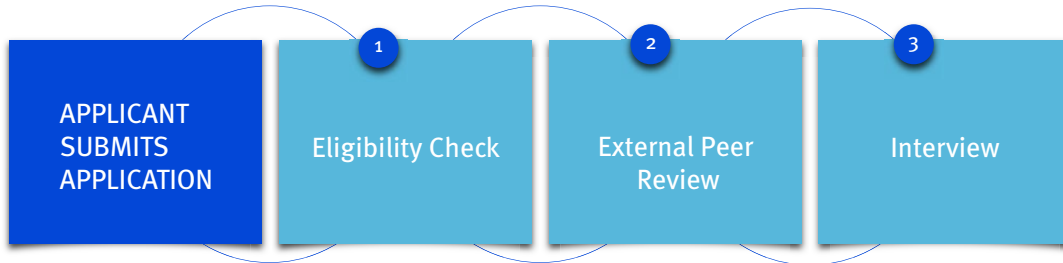
Detailed plans for secondments

Ethical issues form and self-assessment and strategy

To be considered, your application documents must be complete and submitted within the given deadline. Please submit your application via our online portal; any uploads should be in form of a PDF. The application must be in English, and you can only submit one application per call.

## 4.2. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process for all fellowships consists of three stages:



Firstly, all incoming applications will be screened according to the eligibility criteria. If all criteria are met, the application will be sent to two external experts, and the two referees named on application will be contacted for letters of reference. All assessment criteria for the peer review (and later for the interview and letters of reference) are graded on a 0-to-3-point scale:

- 0 = complete lack of credentials on a particular point
- 1 = credentials missing some important points
- 2 = good credentials
- 3 = excellent credentials

Once the external experts have finished their evaluation, candidates will receive the anonymized review form, together with their letters of acceptance or rejection.

As a last step, the project's Selection Committee will shortlist up to three candidates with the highest marks in the peer review who will then be invited to a digital interview of forty-five minutes by the Selection Committee.

The interview will be conducted and evaluated as follows:

- Research pitch and discussion
- Local and international networking opportunities
- Teamwork skills
- Final remarks and questions

Based on the scores from the peer review, the interview, and the letters of reference, the Committee will decide

- a) whether candidates should be kept on the shortlist and
- b) on the ranking of the candidates.

The first candidate on the shortlist will be offered the confirmation letter, with a request to reconfirm within a fortnight after receipt of the letter. Should the first candidate on the list decline the fellowship, then the second and, lastly, the third listed candidates would be invited.

### 4.3 POSSIBILITY OF REBUTTAL

After completion of each step (eligibility check, external peer review, interview), candidates may appeal against their rejection within a fortnight of receipt of the rejection letter. Appeals after the Eligibility Check must be sent to the Project Manager in written form; here, appeals can only be filed in case of process-related shortcomings. From stage 2 onwards, redress procedures are explained in the letter of rejection.

### 4.4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT

The University of Münster is committed to fostering an equal, inclusive, and accessible learning and work environment and values the social and cultural differences and diverse identities of its members. This is why the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion cut across all areas and practices and are central to the University's mission. As a research-focused institution, the University of Münster understands that academic excellence is only possible if individuals and groups of diverse experiences and identities are brought together to share their perspectives in an open and respectful environment. It proactively strives to challenge institutional and systemic barriers at all levels, to ensure full and equal participation of all members of the University, and to prevent discrimination based on race, gender, age, (dis-)ability, social background, sexual orientation, and religion.

The University's broad, proven, multifaceted, and dynamic measures to ensure equal opportunities are fully implemented within the MDC project. For this purpose, the project's own Equity Council will inform about, initiate, and coordinate all equal opportunities measures within the project and its partner network; it is also in charge of quality control once measures are implemented.

Since all fellows will be employed under the University's standard work contracts, they come under the full protection of equality regulations of employment by the Federal State of North-Rhine Westphalia, including provisions for family allowance, regulations for maternity leave, full social security benefits, and health care. In addition, fellows taking up their tenure with a spouse will receive the full support of the University's [Dual Career Service](#). Thus, career advice will not only be given to the fellows themselves but also to their spouses or partners, including support in procuring employment of spouses or partners during fellowship tenures, should this be desired. Fellows arriving with children will furthermore be supported by the University's [Servicebüro Familie](#) in issues ranging from finding places in kindergartens or schools to emergency nanny services.

**After completion of each step (eligibility check, external peer review, interview), candidates may appeal against their rejection within a fortnight of receipt of the rejection letter. Appeals after the Eligibility Check must be sent to the Project Manager in written form; here, appeals can only be filed in case of process-related shortcomings. From stage 2 onwards, redress procedures are explained in the letter of rejection.**

## 5. FURTHER INFORMATION

For all programme-specific questions,  
please contact the project manager:

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