

Guide for Applicants

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1 Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the IPODI fellowship program for experienced female researchers. The present document contains important information concerning your application for IPODI. Please read it carefully before submitting your application. Please also visit the IPODI website: www.ipodi.tu-berlin.de.

**All applications must be submitted in English in the IPODI application portal: www.ipodi.de.
Application deadline: September 17, 2019 (23:59 CEST).**

1.1 About IPODI

The *International Postdoc Initiative* (IPODI) of the Technische Universität Berlin is part of an initiative (*Wissenschaftlerinnen an die Spitze*) of the Main Gender Equality Office that aims to increase the number of female researchers in leadership positions.

Since 2013, IPODI has awarded 30 two-year fellowships to outstanding international researchers. The IPODI fellowship program is open to excellent female researchers of all nationalities and from all fields of research represented at TU Berlin. Women returning from periods of international mobility (researching outside Germany), mobility between sectors (working in the private sector) or non-academic mobility (e.g. after parental leave) are especially encouraged to apply. In the sixth call for application, IPODI awards four fellowships in an internationally open selection round with international peer review.

From 2013 until 2018, IPODI received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 600209 (*Marie Curie Co-funding of Regional, National, and International Programmes*).

1.2 The Fellowships

IPODI Fellows will receive:

- a two-year employment contract at TU Berlin with a competitive salary according to salary group E 13 of TVL, including social security and health insurance as well as pension coverage,
- a contribution to research costs of €10,000 per fellowship,
- personal mentoring by a TU Berlin professor,
- the opportunity for professional training in transferable skills and research management.

2 Eligibility

In order to enter the selection process, applications have to fulfill all of the following criteria at the application deadline:

- Applicants must have completed their PhD but may have no more than ten years of research experience after obtaining their doctoral degree (reference date is normally the issuing date of the doctoral certificate), in exceptional cases an extension of up to three years is possible.¹
- Applicants may not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies etc.) in Germany for more than 12 months in the three years prior to the call deadline.
- The research proposal has to fit into one of the fields of research represented at TU Berlin and must be supported by a cooperating professor of TU Berlin (the future mentor). Applicants are expected to contact a potential cooperating professor themselves before submitting their application.

Incomplete applications and applications that are not submitted in English will not be considered.

3 Application

3.1 The IPODI Application Portal

Applications have to be submitted in English through the [IPODI application portal](#). In order to create an account click REGISTER on the top right when visiting the portal for the first time and follow the instructions. You will have to confirm your registration by clicking on the link in an email that the system will send you after registering. You can log on to the system after confirming your registration. You will be able to log on several times and to save and to change your application before finally submitting it. The IPODI application portal consists of the following modules:

APPLICATION allows you to fill in the application forms, upload the required documents and submit your application.

PREVIEW gives you an overview of the information that you have saved or submitted.

STATUS shows you the progress of your application in the selection process.

PROFILE allows you to change your settings and password.

3.2 Required Documents

In addition to completing the application forms applicants are asked to upload a number of documents as part of their application; all documents have to be in PDF format:

- **CV** with standard academic and research record, including a complete list of publications,

¹ Researchers with diverse career paths are expressly invited to apply for an IPODI fellowship. Applications from researchers with periods of international mobility, mobility between sectors or non-academic mobility are especially welcome. IPODI perceives such career “breaks” as additional qualifications with respect to social and organizational skills and considers them within the eligibility criteria and selection process. Candidates with children are automatically granted an extension of the eligibility period of two years per child. The maximum extension to be granted is three years. Applicants are also able to present further circumstances that may lead to an extension of their eligibility period for application (e.g. care responsibilities, chronic disease, illness).

- **Doctoral certificate** (and, for languages other than English or German, a **certified translation** of the doctoral certificate),
- **Letter of motivation** (max. two pages), in which you describe your career perspectives and motivation to apply for an IPODI fellowship and explain your scientific interests and choice of cooperating professor at TU Berlin,
- **Project proposal** (max. five pages), which should address the following points:
 - The aims and objectives of the proposed project,
 - The state of the art,
 - The originality and innovative nature of the proposed research,
 - The research methodology and approach,
 - The expected outputs.

The following information should also be included as part of the project proposal (not contained in the five pages):

- Full list of references,
- (Short) list of the most important publications in the field(s) of study relevant for the proposed research project,
- **Time schedule** for the project (max. one page),
- Signed **letter of support** by the cooperating professor at TU Berlin; please make sure that your cooperating professor uses the template provided on the IPODI website (see [downloads](#)),
- **University degrees** before doctorate (e.g. BA/BSc or MA/MSc),
- **Birth certificates** of children or **other documents** (for applicants claiming an extension of the eligibility period),
- Two external **letters of reference**; please note that the letters of reference have to be uploaded by your referees themselves, you will be able to notify your referees while editing your application.

3.3 Ethical Issues

Applicants must clearly state in advance whether ethical issues might arise and describe these in their proposals. Every applicant will be required to fill in an ethical issues table during their application. For further information please consult the [Marie Curie Ethics Guide](#).

3.4 Potential Reviewers

Applicants are asked to provide the names and contact details (institution, email, URL) of five potential international reviewers for their application. The cooperating professor of TU Berlin is asked to provide five additional names. The proposed reviewers **must be established and experienced researchers**, who are experts in the scientific field of the proposed project. Furthermore they **must have an international background**, i.e. they must either work in research institutions outside Germany or be international guest scientists at German research institutions.

The proposed reviewers **must not have (or seem to have) a conflict of interest** concerning the applicants and their application as well as the cooperating professor at TU Berlin. A conflict of interest with the applicant or the mentor is assumed in the following cases:

- Kinship or family relationship,

- Economic interest of the reviewer in the approval of the application,
- Present or past dependent employment relationship or academic supervision relationship,
- Present or planned close cooperation as well as scientific cooperation during the past five years,
- Simultaneous former employment at the same employer during the past five years.

Reviewers will be asked to point out possible conflicts of interests themselves and to confirm their impartiality before reviewing an application. The IPODI selection committee may obtain reviews by other than the proposed reviewers. The actual reviewers of the application will remain anonymous.

Please send an email with the names and contact details (name, title/position, institution, email, URL) of five potential reviewers to the IPODI office by September 17, 2019, and make sure that your cooperating professor sends an email with the names of five additional potential reviewers including their contact details by September 17, 2019, to info@ipodi.tu-berlin.de. Please do not contact the suggested reviewers yourself! If you are unsure whether something counts as a conflict of interest please contact the IPODI office well in advance.

4 Selection

4.1 Selection Process

After the call deadline those applications that have passed the eligibility check will enter the selection process. The selection is conducted in accordance with the [European Charter for Researchers](#). Applicants will be able to monitor the status of their application in the IPODI application portal during each stage of the selection process; they will be informed of the outcome of the selection committee meetings within five working days. Successful applicants are expected to take up their work at TU Berlin within five months after the funding decision.

(1) Every application will be evaluated by two to three international reviewers who are distinguished experts in the same area of research as the proposals they assess.

(2) During its first meeting on November 19, 2019, the IPODI selection committee will compile a preliminary ranking list on the basis of the results of the external review. In order to counter possible differences in review “cultures” between the different participating disciplines, IPODI follows the best practice approach of the MSCA and compiles separate ranking lists for the eight major areas of research. An equal proportion of candidates for each area is pre-selected for an interview, based on the applications numbers for the eight research areas. In order to guarantee the scientific excellence of all pre-selected candidates,

The IPODI Selection Process



only candidates with a score of at least 80% (4 out of 5 points) can be invited.

(3) During its second meeting on December 17, 2019, the IPODI selection committee will conduct interviews with up to 10 pre-selected candidates. These will take 30 minutes (15 minutes presentation, 15 minutes questions and discussion). The cooperating professor of TU Berlin will also be invited to the interview.

(4) After the interviews the selection committee will compile a final ranking list for funding recommendation on the basis of the results of the external review and the results of the interviews.

4.2 Selection Criteria

The external reviewers will evaluate applications according to the following criteria; the total score of the written review is the average value of the scores of the individual reviews:

Criteria	Criteria in details	Weight	Max. points
Written review			
1. Scientific and personal qualification	1.1 Scientific quality of the applicant, including previous research records, and the applicant's capability to carry out the research project (independently) 1.2 Experience in (international) research collaborations and teamwork skills 1.3 Additional qualifications of relevance for the proposed project 1.4 Impact of the project on the scientific career	30 %	1.5
2. Quality of the proposal	2.1 Scientific quality of the research proposal and the innovative potential for the creation of new knowledge 2.2 Interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches, concepts, and intersectoral collaborations 2.3 Relevance of the research topic and the impact of the expected results for the development of science, technology and/or society 2.4 Quality (and feasibility) of the research concept and the methodology	30 %	1.5
3. Career perspectives	3.1 Motivation 3.2 Impact of the fellowship on the career development 3.3 Overall career perspectives	25 %	1.25
4. Mentoring aspects	4.1 Reasons for the selection of the mentor 4.2 Description of planned mentoring 4.3 Alignment of the research proposal with the scientific fields of the mentor respectively of TU Berlin	15 %	0.75
Max. points in written review: 5			
Interview			
	1. Presentation of the project and project plan 2. Presentation of the applicant's motivation and career perspectives 3. Overall performance and discussion potential	20 %	1.0
Max. points in total: 6			

Evaluation scores will be given for each of the four criteria – not for the sub criteria – and multiplied with the weight factor. For each criterion scores from 0 to 5 will be given, with the possibility of half-point scores:

- 0 (*very poor*) The application fails to address the criterion or a judgment is not possible due to missing information.
- 1 (*poor*) The application addresses the criterion inadequately.
- 2 (*fair*) The application addresses broadly the criterion, however there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 (*good*) The application addresses the criterion well, however it can be improved.
- 4 (*very good*) The application addresses the criterion very well; however some points can still be improved.
- 5 (*excellent*) The application addresses the criterion in an excellent manner; no improvements are needed.

5 Data Privacy Statement

The International Postdoc Initiative takes the protection of your privacy and your personal data very seriously, particularly in the context of online applications and our applicant management procedures. IPODI has undertaken extensive security measures to ensure the protection of your data. The personal data you provide will be used for the purposes of processing your application, initiating an employment relationship, and evaluating the program. For detailed information please consult our [data privacy statement](#).

6 Contact

If you have further questions concerning your application please visit the [FAQ section](#) on the IPODI website or contact the IPODI office.

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