



Pre-Doc Award 2025/2026

Application and Programme Details

1 April 2025

Timeline

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 April 2025 | Opening of the call |
| 31 May 2025 | Application deadline |
| June 2025 | Meeting of the selection committee |
| August 2025 | Notification of acceptance or rejection |
| Oct. 2025 – Jan. 2026 | Start of the contracts |
| Oct/Nov. 2025 – Sep. 2026 | Pre-Doc Award framework programme (e.g. Kick-off, workshops for pre-docs and postdocs, Final Symposium and individual funding for pre-docs) |

Application Details

Predoc requirements

Graduates with an excellent academic record

1. from Leipzig University and other nationwide and international universities,
2. from diploma or master's degree courses or those leading to a state examination and that allow to start doctoral studies in Germany,
3. in the transition period at the end of the university studies, either being
 - maximum of eight months after graduation (date of the certificate is decisive) at the time of the deadline for applications
 - or**
 - **for EU citizens:** shortly before completion of studies (final certificate has to be achieved within the first six months of the Pre-Doc Award funding period). Exception: Students who complete their studies with the state examination for the teaching profession ("Lehramt") can apply if they complete their studies in the summer semester 2026 at the latest in order to ensure the connection to a possible traineeship at school ("Referendariat").
 - **for non-EU citizens:** due to residence regulations, having their final certificate latest in the month before the contract start (the contract can start between 1st October 2025 and 1st January 2026),
4. with the intention of doing a doctorate at Leipzig University
5. who have not started their doctoral studies and are therefore not yet on any faculty list for doctoral researchers.



Tandem partner requirements

- **Postdocs in the R3 phase (established researchers – usually four to eight years after the dissertation), including junior group leaders and researchers with a habilitation certificate (PDs)**
 1. of all faculties and research institutions at Leipzig University with an at least 25% full time equivalent position,
 2. usually with a temporary employment contract or a position that is financed by a scholarship,
 3. in the period of qualification for a professorship,
 4. with the main part of their work being of scientific nature.
- **Junior Professors and Tenure track professors** from Leipzig University

(In the following, both groups are jointly addressed with the term ‘postdoc’)

Application Language

Submissions are preferred in English language. German applications are possible.

Application Documents

Please provide the following documents via email as one PDF file in the indicated order. For further information, please also read the call and the FAQs.

| Document title | Explanation and remarks |
|------------------|---|
| Cover letter | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- form: 1-2 pages maximum (Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing)- Statement jointly written by the predoc and the postdoc, summarizing<ul style="list-style-type: none">o the objectives of the joint work,o reasons for the application ando detailing the previous and/or planned working relationship (e.g. frequency and type of meetings).- The postdoc is asked to explain the planned support for the predoc in achieving the joint objectives.- At the end of the cover letter, both predoc and postdoc shall confirm that they have read, and agree to adhere to, the Pre-Doc Award programme details (see underneath). |
| Project proposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- form: 3 pages maximum, including references and graphics (Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing)- Content:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o titleo broader research context, subject areao 2-3 sentences on the current state of researcho research question(s)/hypothesiso research objectiveso potential resultso work plan incl. timeline (focus: Pre-Doc Award year; dissertation may be considered in addition) |



| Document title | Explanation and remarks |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ plans for applying for funding (third party funding or scholarships for the doctoral project/research project), please take into account the funding agencies' terms and conditions (e.g., language of application, nationality of applicants) → The proposal should be self-explanatory (for an audience not doing research in the same field of expertise), enable a classification in the field of expertise and assessment of eligibility for funding - The proposal should outline the main features of the planned dissertation project, as well as the work in the Pre-Doc Award year - It does not have to be a final exposé of the later doctorate. |
| CV of the predoc | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure equal opportunities, please list times of family-related leaves (e.g., parental leaves or care periods). - For statistics and monitoring of the programme, please list your gender (m/f/d) and nationality. - For non-EU citizens: For visa purposes, please include your date of birth. |
| CV of the postdoc | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure equal opportunities, please list times of family-related leaves (e.g., parental leaves or care periods). - For statistics and monitoring of the programme, please list your gender (m/f/d) and nationality. |
| List of publications of the postdoc (and, if applicable, of the predoc) | 2 pages maximum, if necessary, please focus on the most recent and subject-related publications |
| Predoc: Graduation certificate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the degree will be obtained <i>after the application deadline, but prior to potentially starting the Pre-Doc Award funding</i>, please hand in a transcript of records as well as an estimation for the date of receiving the final certificate. Once received, please submit the final certificate without being asked. - If the degree will be obtained <i>after starting the Pre-Doc Award funding period in October 2025</i>, please provide additional documents (see final line of this table). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For EU citizens, the final certificate has to be achieved six months after funding/contract start (Exception: Students with the state examination for the teaching profession (“Lehramt”) can apply if they complete their studies in the summer semester 2026 at the latest), ○ For non-EU citizens, due to residence regulations, the final certificate has to be obtained latest in the month before the contract start (the contract can start between 1st October 2025 and 1st January 2026). |



| Document title | Explanation and remarks |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the degree is international, please provide a prove of equivalence to a German degree or a prove that it permits to start doctoral studies at a German university. Please note: In case both is not provided until the selection committee meets, your acceptance to the programme is preliminary. |
| <p>Confirmation of support of potential faculty supervisor(s)</p> | <p>This shall not be a letter of recommendation, but rather a signed confirmation regarding the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project is known and supported in terms of content, - The best possible ideological and organizational support will be granted (e.g. by integrating the predoc into the working group), - Willingness, in case of departure or longer absence of the postdoc, to take on mentoring and supervising tasks during the Pre-Doc Award year, or to find (together with the applying postdoc) a new postdoc tandem partner, - Willingness, in case of success of the predoc, to supervise her or him in the doctoral research/dissertation and to include the postdoc in further supervising, or, if more suitable, to help in finding other supervisor(s). - If the tandem partner is a Junior or Tenure-Track Professor s/he may draft the support letter themselves. However, they are expected to confirm that, in the event of an extended absence or a change in position, they will assist the predoc in finding a new (additional) supervisor at Leipzig University. - Please use the template provided. |
| | <p>If you expect to achieve the final certificate of the predoc after the start of the funding and contract, but within its first six months (or, as a student with the state examination for the teaching profession (“Lehramt”), in the summer semester 2026 at the latest), please provide in addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A plausible justification in plain text (half page maximum, Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing), - Your personal schedule outlining the major steps to be taken until receiving the final certificate from studies (including the period during which any compulsory final thesis is evaluated), - As far as possible, documents that provide proof of the statues and the to be expected certificate within the indicated time of the funding period (e.g., an extract from the examination regulations stating the time period you have for preparing the final thesis after its registration and proof of the registration of your thesis, if the final thesis is compulsory), - Transcript of records, - 1-page exposé on the content of the final thesis (e.g. Master’s thesis; does not apply for studies graduating with a state examination) |



Selection

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria are the

- Qualification and academic potential of the predoc and the postdoc,
- Fit of the collaboration between postdoc and predoc,
- Innovativeness of the approach and the subject,
- Plausibility and comprehensibility of the proposed research and working schedule,
- Potential for acquiring future funding for the predoc,
- Gender and faculty balance in the funded tandems.

Predocs with disabilities and equal qualifications are given preference.

Who is evaluating the applications?

The Vice-Rector for Talent Development will appoint a selection committee deciding on the projects to be funded. Although this committee is interdisciplinary, it is not possible to represent all subjects.

The committee shall include:

- The Vice-Rector for Talent Development,
- The referent of the Vice-Rector,
- At least one representative of the Board of the Graduate Academy Leipzig,
- At least one professor of each faculty of Leipzig University, of which applications were received,
- A representative of the Department of Research Services,
- The Commissioner for equal opportunities,
- If applicable, the representative for Employees with Disabilities.

The coordinator of the Pre-Doc Award Programme will take part in the selection commission in a consultative capacity and in the function of protocolling the session.

Programme Details

Pre-Doc Award Programme Timeline

The application deadline is **31st May 2025**. Notifications of acceptance/rejection will be given in August 2025. The administrative steps to prepare for a potential employment are to be taken shortly afterwards. The start of the programme for all projects will take place with a Kick-off event in January 2026, the contract as a research assistant can start between 1st October 2025 and 1st January 2026.

The Pre-Doc Award programme consists of the individual project activities for each Pre-Doc Award tandem and a number of pre-defined activities for the overall group cohort. The most important of them are the Pre-Doc Award Kick-off (January 2026) as well as the Final Symposium towards the end of the funding period (likely November 2026) and several workshops for the predocs and postdocs.



Expectations of the Awardees

When selected for funding within the Pre-Doc Award programme, all awardees (predocs and postdocs) are expected to adhere to the following aspects. In order to assure that all predocs and postdocs are aware of this, a confirmation is requested in the cover letter of the application.

(1) Strive for funding (scholarships and third party funding):

Predocs – supported by the postdoc – shall develop the doctoral project presented in the application and prepare at least one application for a doctoral scholarship during the funding period **and/or** the postdoc – in collaboration with the predoc and based on the planned doctoral project – shall apply for third party funding, ideally as the Principle Investigator (PI) of a project that secures funding for the predoc.

(2) Participate in the Pre-Doc Award framework programme:

Predocs and postdocs shall participate in the Pre-Doc Award events and networking activities, particularly the:

- Kick-off (half day; January 2026),
- Workshop “Erfolgreiche Stipendienbewerbungen” (for predocs)
- Workshop “Interviewtraining” or another academic and funding acquisition related topic such as academic writing by arrangement (obligatory for predocs and voluntary for postdocs),
- Peer networking and discussion meetings for the participants (organised by the awardees; likely 90 minutes each),
- Workshop “Leadership and Supervision” and potential further workshops (for postdocs)
- Potential further events like Lunch Lectures upon demand and feasibility
- Final Symposium (likely November 2026).

(3) Support public relations for the Pre-Doc Award:

Predocs and postdocs shall support the public relations for the Pre-Doc Award by providing related information for respective channels, e.g. the website and Leipzig University’s staff magazine ‘LUMAG’, if requested. They shall also make the Pre-Doc Award visible in the Leipzig University Research Information System (leuris) and “Forschungsbericht” (FOB). They are further encouraged to add the Pre-Doc Award to their personal CVs.

(4) Provide information for the programme evaluation:

Predocs and postdocs shall participate reliably in the Pre-Doc Award evaluation. For the overall evaluation, a questionnaire will be provided to ease and standardise the procedure. The final evaluation will likely include, among general feedback about the programme, the following information for each submission: the submission date, the name of the funding body and the outcome (funding granted or not and if the funding was accepted or not by the awardees). As the funding application process may take longer than the Pre-Doc Award funding period, this also applies for answers received after the Pre-Doc Award funding period.

(5) Keep your contact data up to date:

Predocs and postdocs shall inform the Pre-Doc Award coordination in case of any relevant change of contact data or employment status.



Funding Terms

The funding of the predoc within the Pre-Doc Award is a position as a graduate assistant (*Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft, WHK*) with 19 hours per week for 12 months. The predoc will be employed by Leipzig University, Federal State of Saxony.

In most cases, the rate will be the one for WHKs with a master's degree (or equivalent degree). Please note that the time as a research assistant with a master's degree is counted as time for the qualification period before finishing the PhD according to the "Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz". Should you wish to apply for the Pre-Doc Award funding phase and make use of the option that the final degree will be received within the first six months of the funding period, the rate for WHKs with a bachelor's degree will apply for this first part of the funding. For graduate students striving for a state exam, the contract, in this case, would start with a position as student assistant (*Studentische Hilfskraft, SHK*). As soon as the final certificate is achieved, both contracts can be changed to WHK with a master's or equivalent degree).

Detailed information on *WHK* contracts can be found in the [intranet](#) of Leipzig University.

Who is who in the Pre-Doc Award

There are on the awardees' side at least three people involved in the Pre-Doc Award application and programme: The predoc, the postdoc, a supervisor/professor.

(1) The predoc

(2) The postdoc

The postdoc shall function as a mentor for the predoc, supporting the process and progress, as well as other questions related to the Pre-Doc Award and later dissertation period. If the discipline of the tandem allows, she/he will also be the content-related supervisor of the predoc. For the period after the Pre-Doc Award year, her/his ongoing contribution to the supervision of the PhD is strongly recommended.

At the same time, the postdoc is an awardee her-/himself. She/he gains access to the programme network and fosters personal supervision skills. Individual advice regarding the postdoc awardee role or personal career pathway may be requested from the academic staff development.

(3) The supervisor

For administrative handling as well as the planned dissertation, the involvement of a professor is essential. She/he functions as the disciplinary superior of the predoc. This means, she/he has to sign the employment forms and usually all the other official documents and shall support the predoc in the best possible way (e.g. by integrating them into the working group).

At the same time, in most cases, this person will be the/a supervisor of the future dissertation project and potentially one of the reviewers of the dissertation.

Other (junior) professors and, depending on the regulations for supervising and reviewing doctoral researchers of the faculty, postdocs may later on be involved in the supervision of the doctoral researcher, e.g. via forming a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC).



Administrative Steps

Prior to the employment, the employing institution will have to hand in a “request for employment” (ANTRAG auf Einstellung einer Hilfskraft an der Universität Leipzig) signed by the head of the institution. This form can be found in the [intranet](#) of Leipzig University. Detailed information about steps to take, contact persons and templates for the forms will be provided after the selection of the funded awardees.

Contact Information

The Pre-Doc Award is led by the Vice-Rector for Talent Development. The programme is coordinated by the Pre-Doc Award Programme Coordinator (Johanna Mogwitz), supported by Matthew Cummins.

Please submit your application via email as one PDF file and in the indicated order to Johanna Mogwitz. For further information, please also read the call and the FAQs.

| Programme Lead | Programme Coordination | Coordination Assistance |
|---|--|---|
| Vice-Rector for Talent Development Prof. Dr. Roger Gläser +49 341 97-30010 prorektor.talententwicklung@uni-leipzig.de | Academic Staff Development Johanna Mogwitz +49 341 97-34997 johanna.mogwitz@zv.uni-leipzig.de | Matthew Cummins +49 341 97-34997 pre-doc-assistenz@uni-leipzig.de |

Notes on Data Protection

By submitting your application documents, you acknowledge your consent to the processing of the data contained therein for the Pre-Doc Award selection procedure. Please note that this also allows the doctorate list responsible at your (future) faculty to inform the Pre-Doc Award coordination team if you are listed already. You have the right to revoke that consent at any time. The data that you provide in the application will only be used for the selection procedure and, in case of selection and funding, for programme purposes, carried out in accordance with Art. 6 of the General Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO, Datenschutzgrundverordnung). This means, that you, for example, agree your data to be shared among the selection committee members from different university bodies (for restricted use within the Pre-Doc Award selection procedure) or to the coordination to address and exchange information with members from the faculty you are aiming for to be employed within the awardee period, e.g. for the purpose of the selection, contract preparation or individual funding processes.

The storage of data is subject to the relevant provisions of the DSGVO on archiving of data.

According to the DSGVO, you have the right to ask for information concerning the processing of your data from the data controller (i.e. the application addressee); you also have the right to rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, as well as the right to object to the processing of the data.

An application via email is considered questionable under data protection law. The applicant assumes full responsibility.



Confirmation of Support / Agreement of Collaboration

I, [Full Name], [Academic Title, e.g., Professor/Junior Professor/Tenure-Track Professor], at the [Department/Faculty Name] of Leipzig University, hereby confirm my full support and collaboration in relation to the application and planned doctoral project of [predoc's Full Name].

I acknowledge that the project proposed by the predoc is known to me and I fully support it in terms of its content and academic objectives. I am committed to providing both ideological and organizational support throughout the pre-doctoral phase. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Integration of the predoc into the working group and department activities.
- Granting access to relevant seminars, and academic resources.
- Providing mentorship and guidance on the predoc's academic and research development.

Furthermore, I confirm my willingness to:

1. **Supervision and Mentorship:** Act as disciplinary superior for the predoc, and, in collaboration with the involved postdoc, provide continuous mentorship throughout the pre-doctoral phase.
2. **Responsibility in Case of Absence:** Should the involved postdoc depart or be absent for an extended period, I am prepared to take over their mentoring and supervising responsibilities during the Pre-Doc Award year, or jointly assist in finding a suitable new tandem partner.
3. **Future Supervision:** Should the predoc start his doctoral research at Leipzig University, I am willing to supervise the dissertation of the predoc, while ensuring the involvement of the postdoc in co-supervision, or, if more appropriate, assist in identifying alternative supervisors.
4. **Succession Planning (for Junior/Tenure-Track Professors):** As a Junior/Tenure-Track Professor (if applicable), I further confirm that in case of an extended absence, change in position, or departure, I will actively support the predoc in finding a new/additional faculty supervisor within Leipzig University.

Sincerely,

[Full Name]
[Academic Title & Position]
[Department/Faculty Name]
Leipzig University
[Email Address]
[Signature & Date]