Guidelines for applicants

In General

Paul Scherrer Institut (PSI) opens a new "bottom-up driven" post-doctoral program, PSI-FELLOW, to enable individual experienced researchers (Postdocs) from all over the world to pursue their research career at one of our internationally recognized research departments. The application has to be made together with a senior scientist at PSI, who will act as the fellow’s mentor.

PSI is active in condensed matter physics, materials sciences, particle physics, life sciences and medicine, nuclear and non-nuclear energy research and energy-related ecology. The Postdocs will benefit from the outstanding research infrastructures, including access to world leading large-scale facilities such as the Swiss Light Source (SLS), the Spallation Neutron Source (SINQ), the Swiss Muon Source (SμS) or the proton accelerator, to name the largest facilities. In addition to the highly innovative scientific environment, PSI offers great opportunities for continuous education and training in areas such as project management, presentation-techniques and improvement of language skills, etc.

PSI-FELLOW Postdocs are offered a PSI contract of two years. PSI-FELLOW will host in total 48 incoming and 12 re-integration fellows over the project period of 60 months.

PSI-FELLOW is co-funded by the FP7: People Marie-Curie action COFUND. The program will contribute to sustainable scientific excellence of the ERA by enabling a new generation of highly qualified researchers to efficiently disseminate scientific knowledge. There has been a first call in 2012. The second call is in 2014 (June 1 with deadline August 4, 2014).
Eligibility Criteria

The below explained eligibility criteria must be fulfilled in order to apply to the PSI-FELLOW PROGRAM:

a) Transnational mobility schemes

**Incoming mobility** for non-Swiss-resident applicants from Member States, associated or third countries as defined by the EC in the People work programme (applicant must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc) in Switzerland for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the application deadline. Short stays, such as holidays, are not taken into account),

OR

**Re-integration** of Member State or Associated country nationals having carried out research in a third country for at least 3 years and in the last 12 months prior to the application deadline.

b) Educational background

**Doctorate holder** (not later awarded than two months after the application deadline)

**Publication record** (at least one original accepted first author publication in press or published in a peer-reviewed journal)

Application

On the PSI-FELLOW website [http://www.psi.ch/psi-fellow/list-of-mentors-and-themes](http://www.psi.ch/psi-fellow/list-of-mentors-and-themes) candidates will find a list with all the potential mentors indicating their fields of expertise and their research interest. The candidate will then contact a mentor in order to get information about available resources, instruments and already available knowledge at PSI in the particular field. This exchange of information will allow the applicant to develop a project-idea and after mutual agreement between the mentor and the applicant, the applicant will formulate in close collaboration with the mentor a written proposal.
The written proposal must consist of a personal part (CV), a project description, the ethical issues guidelines and 2 reference letters. Templates form A_01, A_02, A_03, A_04 and A_05 can be downloaded from http://www.psi.ch/psi-fellow/

**Personal part (CV, form A_01 and form A_02)**
The personal part includes education and academic record, list of publications work experience, awards, description of most important research projects and achievement, participation in conferences with oral contributions or poster presentations, and mobility experiences. The personal part serves to evaluate the scientific capability of the applicant and will value personality traits such as scientific skills, teamwork capabilities, multi-disciplinary projects, industrial research experiences, management and/or teaching skills, funding application experience, and working experience in different countries and cultures. In case the applicant has taken a career break (e.g. due to family commitments, diseases or disabilities) the candidate will not been penalized. Provisions will be made such that the merit-judging process is well balanced and that creative and diversified applicants are favoured by the evaluation process.

**Proposal description (form A_03)**
Includes a detailed description of the research project, plus a short addendum by the future mentor, describing how the applicant will be supported and which resources will be attributed to the project. The research project will be evaluated according to (i) research and technological quality, (ii) appropriateness of methodology and approach, (iii) originality, (iv) timeliness and relevance, (vii) feasibility and (viii) foreseen support of the postdoc during the program. Find more details in form A_03.

**Ethical issues guidelines (form A_04)**
The ethical issues guidelines need to be read, understood and the form needs to be signed. They are part of the application papers.

**Reference letters (form A_05)**
The applicant chooses 2 referees who have profound knowledge about the science performed by the applicant. Referees should have a high academic reputation in the scientific field of interest. It is then the referees who submit the filled in reference letters (also available as a template, form A_05) separately, prior to the application deadline indicating their name and email address to the PSI-FELLOW program management unit (PMU) (contact: psifellow@psi.ch).
Evaluation process

In a first step all the applications will be verified by the PMU regarding the eligibility of the applicant and ethical criteria (available as template during the application process). In case an application includes research activities excluded from funding under FP7 or contravening to Swiss Federal ethical regulations, the application will be qualified as ineligible. After passing the eligibility check and ethical issue check, the applications are being forwarded to the selection committee. Each application will be evaluated by one expert of the internal selection committee as well as by two external experts. These reviewers are chosen according to the research area the candidate is coming from/moving to. The applications will be evaluated according to the criterion described under “Application” (see above).

Each of the two parts of the written application as well as the reference letters will be given a score between 1 and 5 (1 = poor, 2 = average, 3 = good, 4 = very good, 5 = excellent). The weights will be 40 % for the research project’s part, 40 % for the applicant’s personal part and 20 % for the reference letters. The applicants with an overall score above a threshold value will be then invited for the interview.

Interviews

The interview will be divided into 2 parts; a scientific interview, which will last 30 minutes and an interview concentrating on “soft skills”. During the scientific interview, scientific experts will evaluate the candidate’s ability to outline his/her project in a 10 minutes presentation followed by a 20 minutes discussion on his/her contributions to a successful study within a given timeframe and team.

The second part of the interview, lead by a representative of the HR division, will help to assess the applicant’s soft skills and will serve to “seal the deal” and to obtain a complete portrait of the applicant.

Each interview will get a score by the evaluators between 1 – 5. The weighting of these scores will be two-third and one-third for the scientific and the soft skills, respectively.

For all candidates a final overall score will be calculated by giving 40 % weighting to the written application and 60 % weighting to the interview results. The successful candidates will receive an acceptance letter about their nomination as a PSI-FELLOW. The nomination needs to be accepted by the applicants within one month after receipt of this letter. In case some of the top-ranked applicants do not sign the contract within the given timeframe, the next applicant on the reserve will be invited for contractual negotiations. A proportion of applications ranked below the 30 top-ranking applications are retained on a reserve list.

Appointment conditions of the selected PSI-FELLOW postdocs

The fellows will be given an employment contract and become PSI full time employees for the 2 years duration of their fellowship.
The general employment conditions at PSI are governed by the Swiss Federal Personnel Law of March 24\textsuperscript{th} 2000 and the ETH Domain Personnel Regulations of March 15\textsuperscript{th} 2001. The working time for a full time employee is 41 hours a week with a flexible working hour model.

### Important dates to remember

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<td>June 1, 2014</td>
<td>Call for application</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 4, 2014 / 24:00 CEST</strong></td>
<td>Application deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15, 2014</td>
<td>Results of written application evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 22 to October 10, 2014</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<td>October 31, 2014</td>
<td>Final results and attributions of fellowships</td>
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<td>November 30, 2014</td>
<td>Deadline for the acceptance of fellowships</td>
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<td>November 2014 - March 2015</td>
<td>Implementation phase of PSI-FELLOW with <strong>latest starting date for fellows on March 1, 2015</strong></td>
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