



Applicants guide

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Applicants guide

Thank you for your interest in the DISCOVER programme. Please read this guide carefully before applying. If you have any questions, please contact us on momed@bric.ku.dk

Before you apply:

Make sure you are eligible. Your application will not be evaluated if you do not match the eligibility criteria. The criteria are precise criteria regarding mobility, educational level and time since obtaining a master's degree. Only documented career breaks will be taken into account as described under eligibility criteria. Also, incomplete or late applications will not be evaluated.

Eligibility criteria:

International mobility: Candidates can have any nationality but must undertake transnational mobility according to the MSCA rules. Thus, candidates must not have resided or carried out their main activity in Denmark for more than 12 months in the three years prior to the call deadline. Further, applicants working at UCPH for more than 3 months before the deadline will be considered ineligible.

Education: Candidates must hold a master's degree in a relevant field at the time of application, obtained no longer than three years before application deadline. Candidates can switch to another field of research than their masters but must have sufficient understanding/skills to address the potential research project. In acknowledgement of different career paths, candidates holding a MD degree can apply until five years from obtaining their degree. To ensure equal opportunities, exceptions to the 3/5-year rule are made for applicants with documented career breaks (parental leave, illness, mandatory military/civil service). Candidates must not already hold a PhD degree.

Application requirements

In order to be eligible, a complete set of application material (listed below) submitted in due time is required. Application can only happen online via the link on the Discover homepage, the KU job portal, euraxess or nature job. A complete set of application material (**in English**) is required:

- Online application form including personal details
- Motivation letter/cover letter
- CV (*mandatory template*)
- A signed eligibility declaration (*mandatory template*)
- List of two-three referees, whereof one should preferably be the master's degree supervisor (*mandatory template*)
- Certified copy of original master diploma and transcripts records in the original language, including an authorized English translation if issued in other language than English *
- Documentation of English test**
- Documentation of career breaks, if any
- Other relevant information for consideration

**Application without a final master's degree diploma is feasible, but the thesis should be defended and the diploma issued (or other official documentation of the obtained degree) is available beginning of January 2022 in case the applicant is called for an interview (January 11-12 2022).*

***If not available at the time of application, copy of an English test will be required at time of interview.*

Mandatory templates for your application (find and downloads these templates on the Discover homepage:

- Declaration of eligibility
- List of referees
- CV



Key selection criteria

The selection will be merit-based, using weighed criteria in three defined areas: Education and track record, Scientific potential and Motivation.

Criteria for evaluation of application material

Education and track record (70%)

- Master-degree in a field relevant to the prioritized group/project the candidate wishes to engage in during the fellowship (Candidates can swap to another research field than that of their master-degree, however, they need a sufficient background to ensure project feasibility)
- Grades obtained during education
- Experience with original research project for master thesis
- Scientific communication
- Publications
- Other professional merits (teaching, supervision, scientific communication, fellowships, prizes and awards etc.)

Motivation (30%)

- The candidate's general motivation for taking on doctoral training
- Specific motivation for applying to the discover programme
- Motivation for the specific groups/projects the candidate would like to work with

Criteria for shortlisting based on interviews

Scientific potential (70%)

- Outcome of master thesis project (exploitation, dissemination and communication)
- Scientific communication skills
- Ability to reflect and form scientific ideas
- Scientific abilities and competences obtained in previous work (reference letters)

Motivation (30%)

- The candidate's general motivation for taking on doctoral training
- Specific motivation for applying to this programme
- Motivation for the specific groups/projects the candidate would like to work with

Scoring system

In each phase, the predefined selection criteria and scoring of 1-5 will be used. Only applicants receiving a score above the quality cut-off (≥ 3) will be considered qualified.

5	Excellent. The candidate meets all the evaluation criteria in the category with high quality and any shortcomings are minor.
4	Very good. The candidate meets most of the evaluation criteria in the category with high quality and only a few shortcomings.
3	Good. The candidate meets most of the evaluation criteria in the category with a good quality, but improvements could be expected.
2	Fair. The candidate meets most of the evaluation criteria in the category with a fair quality and there are several shortcomings
1	Poor. The candidate meets the evaluation criteria the category inadequately and there are significant shortcomings

Table 1: Based on the candidate scores, a ranked list of candidates scoring above the quality cut-off (>3) will be made. Candidates scoring below 3 will not be ranked

Evaluation procedure

Evaluation of candidates will occur in three steps:

1. Evaluation of application material

- Each eligible application will be evaluated individually by two selection committee (SC) members following strictly predefined evaluation criteria and scoring system (Please see section above).
- Based on the candidate scores, a ranked list of candidates scoring above the quality cut-off (>3) will be made. Candidates scoring below 3 will not be ranked.
- Based on the ranking, up to 32 candidates will be invited for online interviews with the SC.
- All candidates will be informed of their evaluation result.

2. Shortlisting based on online interviews

- Candidates who are invited to online interviews will be interviewed by a panel of four members from the SC (two international experts, two BRIC PIs). The candidate will present her/his master thesis project and a preselected scientific paper.
- The interviewers will use a standardised interview guide and one of the international experts will lead the interview. Potentially recruiting BRIC PIs can only participate as observers.

- Each SC member will score each candidate using the predefined evaluation criteria and scoring system (see the section above). Based on the SC's scores, a ranked list will be made of candidates scoring above the quality cut-off (>3). Candidates scoring below 3 will not be ranked.
- Based on the ranking, up to 16 candidates will be shortlisted for site visits in each call. The candidates' expression of interest for a host group can be considered at this step, to ensure diversity among the recruited fellows (field of research, gender, professional background).
- All shortlisted applicants will go through formal assessment according to the UCPH HR procedures, assessing their formal qualification for obtaining a PhD-student position at UCPH.
- All candidates will after the online interviews receive their assessment/evaluation result and be informed of their opportunity to redress.

3. Site visits and matchmaking

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to BRIC. Visits will be planned approximately 4 weeks after the online interviews, to ensure sufficient time for obtaining visas if required.

DISCOVER will cover: travel, accommodation and visa, in order to ensure equal opportunities for shortlisted candidates.

The site visit will include:

- Introduction to the training programme
- Employment conditions and settlement as a foreign researcher in Copenhagen etc.)
- Visits to BRIC's laboratories and core facilities, and a meeting with BRIC student representatives.
- Matchmaking meetings (meet with 2-3 potential host PI and their group)

At the matchmaking meetings, research project opportunities will be discussed, and the candidate will have a chance to meet both the PI and other key persons in the research group. Following the visit, each candidate and potential host PIs, submit a prioritized matchmaking list to the programme manager.

4. Final selection

The final selection of the eight candidates to receive a fellowship in a call will be based on the SC's ranking, also taking into consideration the candidates' host priorities and the hosting PIs' interest in the shortlisted candidates. In case of ex-aequo candidates, diversity of the selected candidates will be given priority in terms of gender, field of research and professional background. The remaining shortlisted candidates will be placed on a reserve list.

**EVALUATION
 PHASE 1: Evaluation of
 application material**

Each eligible application will be evaluated individually by two SC members

Based on the ranking, up to 32 candidates will be invited for online interviews.

**EVALUATION
 PHASE 2: Evaluation
 through interviews and
 shortlisting**

Candidates who are invited to online interviews will be interviewed by a panel of four members from the SC (two international experts, two BRIC PIs).

The candidate will present her/his master thesis project and a preselected scientific paper.

Potentially recruiting BRIC PIs can only participate as observers

Based on the ranking, up to 16 candidates will be shortlisted for site visits in each call.

**EVALUATION
 PHASE 3: Final
 selection
 Site visit**

Final ranking based on evaluation scores and candidate and host priorities.

In each phase, the predefined selection criteria and scoring of 1-5 will be used.

Only applicants receiving a score above the quality cut-off (≥ 3) will be considered qualified.

Candidates will be informed of their evaluation result.

Final ranking based on evaluation scores and candidate and host priorities

Figure 1: Describes in short, the 3 steps in the evaluation process

Programme content

DISCOVER's vision is to empower a diverse group of international fellows to become a next generation of creative and responsible researchers, with an ability to translate their biomedical research into clinical value. We will do so by implementing

- Excellent research opportunities in a top international research environment
- Expert supervision and mentoring
- Networking opportunities with other sectors and internationally
- Transferable skills training
- Career development activities

The fellows will build a broad set of competences and skills within research, research governance and transferable skills and participate in career development activities supporting their individual career goals. The goal is to empower all students to fully exploit the potential of their talent.

Fellows will be formally enrolled at the [Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences](#) to obtain a PhD degree following fulfilment of the fellowship and need to take courses of 30 ECTS in their fellowship period (scientific and transferable skills courses).

Table 2. DISCOVER training activities		
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Research skills training		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training through own research • Biomedical research project (For DISCOVER the project has to have strong translational perspectives and include clinical co-supervision) • International secondment 		
Training through scientific/technical courses and seminars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual project-relevant scientific and technical courses 		
Translational research course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translational seminar series – tandem speakers from basic and clinical/applied research 		
Research governance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible research • GDPR 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice open access publishing 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics • Data management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratory sustainability (go green) Course • Individual action plan, peer group training and organize "go green' day" 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratory sustainability seminars (webinars): how to go green in your lab. Seminar series for all at BRIC organised by sustainability committee 		
Transferable skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science communication Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity Course • Skill training in peer group 	Innovation from a clinical Perspective Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning & management 1 Course 		Project planning & management 2 Course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in outreach activities (BRIC) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other transferable skill courses offered by MoMeD, UCPH, EU-LIFE, NorDoc (Stress management, scientific writing and publishing, oral presentation, grants writing, entrepreneurship etc.) 		
Career development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career development plan (reports) • Peer-mentoring groups 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career-mentoring 	
Seminar series		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Fridays: Skill-based thematic career seminars (e.g. writing skills) • Careers outside academia: seminars (non-academic job options) • From postdoc to PI: seminars (personal experience on the transition presented by internal and external PIs) 		

Table 2: Blue: Activities for all PhD-students enrolled in MoMeD. Orange: DISCOVER specific activities mandatory to the fellows. Green: Voluntary activities. A total of 30 ECTS should be obtained through course work. Activities in orange and green can account for some of the ECTS according to the fellow's individual CDP.

Potential host research groups

There are nine potential groups open for application in the first DISCOVER call (2021) – see table 3. A description of the research groups and specific project opportunities in the groups can be found on www.discover.ku.dk and on the BRIC webpage <https://www.bric.ku.dk/research-groups/>

Table 3. Host groups and main research areas	
Andersen group	Brakebush group
Hepatobiliary cancers, Genomics, Epigenetic, Metabolic	Rho GTPases, mouse models, cancer, inflammation
Issazadeh-Navikas group	Khodosevich group
Glioblastoma, neuroinflammation neurodegeneration.	Brain development, neuronal differentiation, transcriptional programs
Kveiborg Group	Lund group
ADAM metalloproteases, integrins, protein trafficking, cell signaling, cancer	Non-coding RNA, cancer models, epigenetics
Porse group	Weischenfeldt Group
Hematopoietic, leukemia, cancer stem cells	Cancer genomics, structural variants, prostate cancer, precision medicine.
Won Group	
Computational Biology, Machine learning, Epigenetics	

Table 3: Potential research groups open for application in the first DISCOVER call 2021

Employment and working conditions

In Denmark, PhD-students are university employees and the fellows have identical employment and working conditions as other researchers. The employment conditions at UCPH are in accordance with agreements between the Ministry of Finance and The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations on Academics in the State. The DISCOVER fellows will receive a UCPH contract specifying the daily workplace as BRIC. The terms of employment, salary and pension are specified in Table 4. The working conditions) are centred around a set of principles ensuring an open, collaborative, secure, including and developing work environment with equality for all staff¹ and is outlined in the UCPH Personnel Policy Handbook².

¹ http://personalepolitik.ku.dk/pdf/Personnel_policy_basic_principles_edited_layout.pdf/

² http://personalepolitik.ku.dk/pdf/Personnel_policy_basic_principles_edited_layout.pdf/

Table 4: Employment and working conditions for DISCOVER fellows

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

- Salary regulated by collective agreements
- Salary upregulated annually to reflect increased seniority and general salary increases
- 17.1% pension of basic salary (transferable if not staying in DK)
- Regulated work week (37 hours/week)
- Full social benefits including public health care
- Right to paid holidays (five weeks plus five special holidays, on top of national holidays)
- Right to salary during own illness and child’s first two sick days
- Right to parental leave (up to 32 weeks paid leave) and two childcare days/child/year until age 7

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Flexible work hours in a family friendly environment (e.g. regular meetings only between 9-16)
- Annual Performance and Development Reviews with nearest leader (main supervisor)
- Healthy physical work environment (mandatory onboarding training in occupational health, safety issues and handling of potential hazardous reagents. Governmental-regulated laboratory facilities and work procedures. Controlled indoor climate. Non-smoking and alcohol policy).
- Healthy psychosocial work environment (Regular satisfaction and well-being assessments with mandatory managerial action plans to handle issues. Flat organisation with freedom of speech. Student and staff representatives in local Liaison Committee. Student and postdoc alliance engaged in dialogue with management and with BRIC’s Scientific Advisory Board. Policy with no-tolerance of harassment and bullying. Individual coaching on stress-handling and in case of long-term illness).

Ethical procedures

DISCOVER will follow the H2020 ethical principles and guidelines. All fellows will have to self-evaluate and get their research project ethically approved. As the fellow research projects will only be developed after the selection of fellows, the project-related ethical procedure will take place in the first part of the fellowship period. However, all applicants for the DISCOVER fellowships need to state as part of the application that they will adhere to the general H2020 ethical principles and guidelines and as part of this, follow the ethical procedure outline for DISCOVER:

- Ethics workshop for fellows, including information part for supervisors
- Self-evaluation of all individual fellow projects selected on the main list and also those selected on the reserve list, using the H2020 ethics self-evaluation template
- Evaluation and local approval from the Research Ethics Committee (The committee evaluate and gives feedback on fellow ethics action plans. Fellows and supervisor adapt action plan if required, before obtaining local permission from Research Ethics Committee)
- Monitoring of the ethics of individual projects will occur with 9-month intervals, as part of the fellow progression reports
- Obtaining relevant national ethical permits (e.g. the Regional Committees on Health Research Ethics (use of patient data and material) and The Animal Experiments Inspectorate (use of animal models)).
- In case of projects with potential use of hESC, early onset of H2020 Ethical Clearance with the EC project officer

The process has been designed to comply with local (UCPH), national and European regulations regarding safety and ethics and will be initiated already in the three-months employment as research assistant. If necessary, the process will be completed during the first months of fellows' employment on the COFUND action. In general, the three Rs (replace, reduce, refine), will be applied to all projects. Project activities with potential ethical concerns will only be initiated after all relevant permits have been obtained. Overall DISCOVER ethical review will take place for each call-specific ethical report (call 1, 2 and 3) and for the final ethics report.