

Guide for Applicants

REWIRE: Reinforcing Women in Research

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND Fellowship Programme

Second Call for Applications

Version 2.2

(18.03.2020)



History of Changes

Version	Publication Date	Changes
1	1 st July 2019	1.3 Indicative Call Timetable
		3.4 Other costs: Addition of information on MSCA Special Needs Allowance
		4a Web-form: Addition of compulsory ORCID iD in web-form
		4c Supporting Documents: Clarifications on the Letter of Support from Hosting Mentor, forms of accepted identification updated
		4d Formatting & Submission Rules: Introduction of disqualification for proposals over the stated page limits, clarification on the use of tables in the application form, clarification on multiple submissions per applicant
		4.2 Selection and Evaluation: Clarification on resubmission rules
2.1	12 th February 2020	4.2 Selection and Evaluation: Clarification on resubmission rules – candidates must of course still adhere to the eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for resubmission
2.2	18 th March 2020	1.3 Indicative Call Timetable: Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the deadline (14 th April 2020) has been extended to 30 th April 2020, 17:00 Austrian time
		4.2 Selection and Evaluation: Clarification on resubmission rules – Letter replying to suggestions and critical feedback from reviewers should be included as an extra page at the end of the Research Proposal Application form

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1. Introduction

1.1 About the REWIRE Programme

The **REWIRE Programme**, co-funded by the University of Vienna and the European Commission, aims to develop a new vision for postdoctoral training that will further strengthen female postdocs and their role as critically thinking, independent, autonomous and risk-taking researchers and innovators, who will contribute to the benefit of academia and society at large.

The overall goal of the **REinforcing Women In REsearch (REWIRE) Programme** is to establish a support scheme for excellent postdoctoral female researchers to foster their scientific development, to nurture their expertise and to make a profound impact on their future careers.

Features of the postdoctoral fellowship positions include:

- A 36-month fellowship in any discipline offered at the University of Vienna
- A competitive programme supporting you in your academic career progression and becoming a mentor for future female researchers
- Working at the best university in Austria¹

In addition to an individual research project and customised career development plan, fellows will be encouraged to:

- Be part of and build up(on) an enhanced research network
- Participate in non-research oriented training programmes
- Develop transferable skills
- Gain international exposure through publications in high-profile journals and presentations, and participation in international conferences

The REWIRE Programme will fund **16 fellowships** over two calls for applications. This is the second call for applications.

The Programme is open to researchers of all ages. However, given that REWIRE has been designed to support researchers in their early-postdoctoral phase who are on their way to the next main steps in their careers (i.e. becoming young group leaders and PIs) REWIRE has a focus on recruiting **ambitious researchers** who have the **potential to embark on independent research careers** and will be **serious candidates for prestigious investigator grants** such as the [ERC Starting Grant](#) or the [Austrian Science Fund \(FWF\) START Programme](#). Applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the aforementioned grants and eligibility criteria prior to applying for a REWIRE fellowship.

The length of the fellowship (36 months) should allow the fellow enough time to develop a high-quality research project and gain the necessary skills to reach a level of **professional maturity and independence** so that towards the end of the fellowship the fellows are able to take the next steps in their careers. Longer-term career perspectives are also available at the University of Vienna; the University has **tenure-track professorship schemes**, and those who have successfully obtained ERC Starting Grants or FWF START grants enter fast-track tenure-track schemes.

¹ See [Shanghai Ranking](#), [Times Higher Education Ranking](#), and [QS Ranking](#)

Although open to all disciplines offered at the University of Vienna, we particularly encourage applications from the following under-represented disciplines², based on the “Frauenförderungs- und Gleichstellungsplan” (available in German):

- Astronomy
- Computer Science
- Cultural Studies
- Earth Sciences
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Law
- Life Sciences
- Mathematics
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Psychology
- Sport Science
- Theology (Catholic, Protestant and Islamic)

1.2 About Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

The REWIRE Programme has received funding from the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA).

The MSCA aim to equip researchers with the necessary skills and international experience for a successful career, either in the public or the private sector. The programme responds to the challenges sometimes faced by researchers, offering them attractive working conditions and the opportunity to move between academic and other settings. More information can be found directly on their website: https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/msca-actions_en

1.3 Indicative Call Timetable

Opening of 2 nd REWIRE Call	14 th February 2020
Deadline for submission of proposals	30th April 2020, 17:00 Austrian time
Eligibility check	Early May 2020
Peer review of eligible applications	May 2020 – July 2020
Compilation of shortlist by Scientific Committee	Early September 2020
Shortlisted applicants invited for interviews	Early September 2020
Interviews	Early-Mid October 2020
Final decision	Early-Mid October 2020
Acceptance by fellows	Within two weeks of receiving offer
Earliest start of fellowship	1 st December 2020
Latest start of fellowship	30 th April 2021

² Gender in Focus 6, pg 96

https://personalwesen.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/d_personalwesen/Gleichstellung/Dokumente/Datenbroschu_re-2018_18-11-22_web.pdf

2. Eligibility Criteria and Application Requirements

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

Applicants of the REWIRE COFUND Programme **must**:

- Be female
- Have been awarded their PhD or will have successfully defended their PhD before the start of the fellowship
- Abide by the MSCA Mobility Rule (see 2.2)
- Submit a complete application (in English) before the specific call deadline (see 4.1)

The REWIRE Programme is open to all nationalities and ages. The REWIRE programme supports ambitious **early-stage** female postdoctoral researchers, who will be **serious candidates** for prestigious investigator grants such as the [ERC Starting Grant](#) or the [Austrian Science Fund \(FWF\) START Programme](#) after the REWIRE fellowship. Applicants should familiarise themselves with these grants and eligibility criteria before applying for REWIRE.

2.2 MSCA Mobility Rule

Fellows will be bound by the MSCA mobility rule: applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies etc.) in Austria for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the call deadline.

Example: For the second REWIRE Call, applicants may not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Austria for more than 12 months between 30th April 2017 and 30th April 2020.

Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account. Proposals from applicants who do not meet this rule will not be eligible and thus will be rejected on formal grounds without scientific evaluation.

2.3 Career Breaks

The University of Vienna is committed to giving scientists the opportunity to return to high-quality research following a career break and/or part-time working. Career breaks/part-time working will be considered for reasons of maternity, care responsibilities sickness or military service on a case-by-case basis. In addition, periods of cross-sectoral mobility will also not be penalised, but regarded as an evolution of a career, and consequently, as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher towards a multidimensional career track. Applicants are asked to present evidence-based CVs as part of the application process and should explain specifically any breaks from a traditional academic research career which they would like the evaluators to consider.

3. Employment and Financial Aspects

3.1 Employment Conditions

Fellows will be employed by the University of Vienna on an employment contract according to the University's Collective Employment contract. The employment conditions are in accordance with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers³. All fellows will receive health insurance, a pension, and generous holiday and sick leave allowances in accordance with Austrian law.

The University will provide the researchers with desk and laboratory space, computer equipment, telephones and email accounts. The fellows will have access to state-of-the-art facilities and free access to specialist libraries and to the main library as well as further professional services including grant application support, career development services, data management, media relations and public outreach.

The University of Vienna provides gender equal working conditions which are family friendly. The University has subsidised childcare facilities in different locations in Vienna as well as flying nannies if needed during work time. It also operates a flexible working system which benefits researchers with families and parents are entitled to special leave in order take care of ill children and spouses. Austria also offers generous parental leave, which is increased if both mothers and fathers take it.

3.2 Salary

Fellows will be expected to work full-time (i.e. 40 hours per week) during the fellowship and will receive a postdoctoral researcher salary in line with Austria's Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff (Salary group B1, postdoc position⁴). The 2020 rate corresponds to €3,889.50 (gross) and is payable 14 times a year. The salary will increase with inflation yearly.

3.3 Research costs

Fellows will receive €1,000 per month of their fellowship (total of €36,000) to fund research related expenses such as:

- costs for training and networking activities that contribute directly to the researcher's career development (e.g. participation in conferences, trips related to the work of the action, training, language courses, seminars, lab material, books, library records, publication costs)
- costs for research expenses
- costs for visa-related fees and travel expenses
- additional costs arising from secondments (e.g. travel costs, accommodation costs for optional secondments)

3.4 Other costs

MSCA Special Needs Allowance

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions have introduced a new allowance to cover the additional costs that its researchers/staff members with a disability face due to the increased costs of their mobility. The aim is to support those with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment,

³ <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter>

⁴ <https://personalwesen.univie.ac.at/en/jobs-recruiting/job-center/salary-scheme/>

whose participation in MSCA entails extra expenses. The allowance can be used to cover, for example, the costs of assistance by third persons or to adapt their work environment. It cannot include costs already covered by another source, such as social security or health insurance.

The request for such an allowance must be individual-based, include an estimated budget and explain the specific participation need(s) of the researcher/staff member concerned. With the help of independent experts, the Research Executive Agency will evaluate the request and decide on the basis of the need(s) of the researcher/staff member and the budget availability.

The special needs allowance will take the form of a lump sum and cover up to 100% of the eligible costs. It will be limited to a maximum of €60,000 per researcher/staff member.

Relocation Costs

Fellows may apply for help with relocation costs from the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG). More information can be found here: <https://www.ffg.at/en/career-grants/tender> (*This is an external funding agency and REWIRE and the University of Vienna are not responsible for this grant scheme. All questions need to be addressed to the funding organisation*).

4. Submission, Evaluation and Selection Procedure

4.1 Submission of Application

A complete REWIRE Fellowship Application consists of the following:

- a) Web-form
- b) Research Proposal Application Form
- c) Supporting documents

a) Web-form

The **web-form** is to be filled out online on the REWIRE website **directly prior** to the submission of the research proposal application form and supporting documents. All fields that are compulsory are marked with a red square in the top right hand corner.

An ORCID ID has been introduced as a compulsory field for Call 2. Please see information [here](#) on how to create an ORCID ID if you don't already have one.

b) Research Proposal Application Form

It is mandatory to use the Research Proposal Application Form template that is downloadable from the REWIRE website. The document includes a **cover page**, proposal **summary** (1 page), **description of planned research** (including subsections; max. 5 pages in total), **literature references** (1 page), **motivation statement** (1 page), and the **ethics self-assessment table** (for more information on ethics see section 5). All text in *italics* can be removed from the application form. Please start each section on a new page.

Keywords and Summary: please pay special attention to the keywords chosen on the cover page. These words will be used to search for peer-reviewers for your application. The summary will be then sent out to the prospective peer-reviewers so it should be written as a clear, stand-alone text from the main proposal.

The **description of the planned research** should be a concise presentation of the scientific proposal with particular attention to the ground-breaking (i.e. novelty and originality) nature of the project. The

proposal should contain a precise description of the scientific objectives/goals, the feasibility of the project, a realistic time schedule of the project, methodologies and associated work plan, a compact description of the impact and benefit to the fellow's career and the integration in the respective research context of University of Vienna. The applicant should provide a **motivation statement** of why she is interested in joining the chosen Department/Research Group as well as outlining her 5-year career plan.

Optional secondments

During the fellowship, the fellow may undertake an optional secondment outside of the University of Vienna to an organisation (academic or non-academic) in an EU Member State or Associated Country⁵. Secondments should be relevant and beneficial for the fellow and in line with the project objectives. Secondments can also take place in Austrian organisations.

Any secondment must be mentioned in the Research Proposal and justified. A letter of commitment from the secondment partner must be submitted with the application. The maximum duration of secondment is 6 months. The secondment phase can be a single period or can be divided into shorter mobility periods. It can also take place at one or more organisations.

Fellows should distinguish secondments from short visits (for example field work) since they have a different nature and pursue different objectives. Secondments are planned in advance, and are an integral part of the research proposal. Fellows will have specific supervision arrangements whilst on secondment and receive training.

Teaching

Teaching is encouraged as it is important for the career development of the fellows. However, the number of teaching hours should not negatively impact the fellow's individual research project.

c) Supporting Documents

- **Academic CV (max 5. pages)** - Applicants must use the template provided on the REWIRE website;
- **Evidence of PhD** - If applicable at the time of submission, applicants must upload their PhD certificates. If the applicant does not yet have a PhD this field is to be left blank;
- **Supporting Letter from the Hosting Mentor** - Each applicant must apply with a Mentor from the University of Vienna. The applicant should choose a suitable Mentor, whose research interests coincide with their own. The Mentor needs to write a Letter of Support supporting the application. This letter should be a recommendation of why the Mentor believes that the fellow is a serious candidate for a REWIRE Fellowship, including how they see the career trajectory of the fellow during and after the REWIRE fellowship. The letters will be carefully looked at by the Selection Committee in the final evaluation stages. More information, including the expected roles of Mentors, can be found [here](#).
- **Copy of valid identification that can be used for international travel (e.g passport photo page, ID card);**
- **Two recommendation letters** - Two recommendation letters in English must be submitted. In the case that your referees would prefer to send their letters direct to the University of Vienna, please request that they send them to: rewire@univie.ac.at;

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cp/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf

- **Letter of Commitment from the secondment partner (if applicable)** - If the research project has planned secondments, a letter of commitment from each secondment partner needs to be submitted with the REWIRE application;
- **Letter replying to suggestions and critical feedback from reviewers (resubmission only)** - Unsuccessful applicants from the first call may resubmit in the second call **if applicants are still eligible according to the eligibility criteria**. A letter should be included as an extra page at the end of the Research Proposal Application Form replying to suggestions and critical feedback received from the reviewers.

d) Formatting & Submission Rules

Proposals must be submitted using the provided templates and be submitted electronically via the REWIRE website. Applicants will receive an email to confirm the application has been received. The following minimum standards **must** be respected:

- Page limits (as given in the provided template per section of the proposal). **If any applicant exceeds the page limit in any section of the proposal, the application will be deemed as non-eligible and will be disqualified from the evaluation process.** The introduction of this rule is based on feedback from Call 1 peer-reviewers, who deemed it extremely difficult to fully review applications where half to full pages of text had been removed because the candidate had exceeded the page limit;
- Header information (the applicant's surname and proposal acronym must be in the header of each page of the Research Proposal Application Form (except the cover page) and the CV);
- A minimum font size of 11 points, except for charts and tables where the minimum font size is 8 points. **Tables are to be used to illustrate core text. Core text should not be included in tables;**
- Single line spacing;
- A4 page size;
- Margins (top, bottom, left and right) must be a minimum of 15mm each (this does not include footers or headers);
- A clearly readable font (e.g. Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman etc.).

The proposal should be prepared by the applicant in cooperation with the Mentor. The submission of the proposal and other actions that follow this procedure (such as withdrawal) fall under the final responsibility of the **applicant**.

Proposals must be submitted before **Thursday 30th April, 17:00 Austrian time**.

Only one proposal can be submitted per applicant. In the event of multiple submissions, the University of Vienna will evaluate the **first** submission only. Please therefore ensure you prepare all of your documents and understand the criteria before submitting. There is no possibility to save an application and come back to it later.

All personal data submitted in the REWIRE application will be managed in accordance with Austrian Data Protection Laws and the GDPR. For the purpose of peer-review, applications may be sent to reviewers outside of the European Union and therefore outside of the scope of Austrian Data Protection Laws and the GDPR.

If you need to withdraw your proposal at any time after submission please contact rewire@univie.ac.at.

4.2 Selection and Evaluation

The selection processes runs over five stages:

1. Eligibility Check:

- After the call closes, each proposal will undergo an eligibility check based on the criteria mentioned in section 2.1.
- All applicants will be informed about whether the proposal passed the eligibility check or not via email.

2. International Peer-Review

- All eligible applicants will undergo an international (single-blind) peer review, carried out remotely by independent experts.
- Following the peer-review, applicants will be informed of the results. If the combined score of the reviewers is below threshold (see 4.3 Evaluation & Selection Criteria), applicants will be rejected and will receive feedback and scores. If above threshold, the application will be forwarded to the Selection Committee and applicants informed accordingly.

3. Selection Committee Evaluation

- The Selection Committee (composed of six distinguished researchers from a number of different disciplines external to the University of Vienna, and chaired by the University of Vienna's Vice Rector of Research and International Affairs), will be given an initial ranking list of proposals that is based on the scores awarded in the peer-review. They will also be given the evaluation forms, scores and full application forms.
- The Selection Committee will convene and approve a shortlist of 16 candidates for interview primarily based on the highest scores and the comments from the peer-reviewers. Selection Committee members can reposition a candidate if they see fit. This must be approved by at least four of the six Selection Committee members.
- Applicants invited to interview will be informed within one week of the Selection Committee's decision and will be expected to attend the interview in person at the University of Vienna. In extenuating circumstances, interviews may be held over Skype. Travel and accommodation will be reimbursed. Full instructions will be communicated to the interviewees in advance of the interview.

4. Interviews

- Interviews will be conducted by the Selection Committee and will last max. 30 minutes. Applicants will present their projects in 10 minutes and explain why they would like to carry out their project at the University of Vienna. They will also be asked to describe their career goals. The rest of time will be for questions and answers from the Selection Committee members.
- Mentors will also be invited to support their applicants but will neither have a vote or be present during the final decision discussion.

5. Selection Committee Final Decision

- Out of the 16 applicants interviewed, a final ranked list of eight applicants (plus a short waiting list of candidates) will be decided consensually by the Selection Committee.
- Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their interview no later than one week after the interview. Unsuccessful applicants will receive the comments from the peer-reviewers and the Selection Committee. Applicants on the waiting list will be informed

accordingly. Successful candidates will be sent official job offers and will have two weeks to respond.

The number of applicants invited to interview, and the number of applicants presented in the final ranked list of candidates and waiting list is subject to the quality of the applicants.

Redress Procedure

Should an applicant feel that there has been a shortcoming in the process for evaluating their proposal, they can submit a redress request. **However, they will not be able to request a re-evaluation because of the views of the peer-reviewers.** Redress requests will be considered in the first instance by the Programme Manager and then forwarded to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will discuss each case separately and decide on the best course of action.

Resubmission

Applicants who were not successful in the first call can resubmit in the second call if, following the reviewers' comments and a discussion with their Mentor, the applicant believes that they are the right candidate for the REWIRE Programme. **The candidate must of course still adhere to the eligibility criteria of the programme.** The REWIRE Programme supports ambitious early-stage female postdoctoral researchers, who will be serious candidates for investigator grants such as the [ERC Starting Grant](#) or the [FWF START](#) after the REWIRE fellowship. Before reapplying for REWIRE, applicants should familiarise themselves with these grants and their eligibility criteria.

Applicants must submit a letter with the resubmission replying to suggestions and critical feedback received from the reviewers. The letter should be included as an extra page at the end of the Research Proposal Application Form.

As the REWIRE Programme is a piloting initiative, only two calls are currently foreseen, although there may be more future calls dependent on funding. This means that there is currently no possibility to resubmit after this call (Call 2).

4.3 Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The evaluation criteria used during the peer-review and shortlisting of applicants will be the following:

a) Competence of the Applicant

- 1. Previous research experience in relation to the proposed research project;*
- 2. Recognised excellence (as appropriate to the discipline and career stage) with regard to publications, conferences, presentations, proceedings, prizes, patents and awards and, if applicable, previous third-party funding raised by the applicant;*
- 3. Evidence of scientific independence, creative thinking, and International experience, such as research activities in an international context and periods of mobility;*
- 4. Capacity to reach a position of professional maturity/independence and leadership.*

It will be made clear to the reviewers that the track record of the candidate should be measured according to their academic age. Career breaks will be considered for reasons of maternity leave, care responsibilities, sickness or military service on a case-by-case basis. In addition, previous periods of cross-sectoral mobility (e.g. a career phase in the non-academic sector) will be considered.

b) The scientific quality of the planned research project will be assessed according to its:

5. *State of the art, objectives and overview of the project*
6. *Completeness and appropriateness of the research methodology and approach*
7. *Originality and innovative aspects of the proposed research;*
8. *How the high-quality, novel research will open up the best career possibilities for the researcher.*

The peer reviewer will be asked to comment on the potential impact and benefit of the project to the fellow's career, and the ethics issues but this will not be scored.

Determining the shortlisted candidates who will be invited to Vienna for an interview will be based significantly on the results from the international peer-review. The criteria for assessing the interview are the following:

c) Presentation of the planned research project

The interview will be assessed according to the candidate's presentation and ability to convince the Selection Committee that she:

9. *is motivated to carry out the proposed project at the University of Vienna;*
10. *has excellent research experience and potential;*
11. *has a convincing implementation plan for the project;*
12. *has a convincing five year career plan.*

4.4 Scoring and Thresholds

The peer-reviewers will be asked to score each of the criteria relating to a) "Competence of Applicant" (criteria 1-4) and b) "Scientific Quality of the planned research project" (criteria 5-8) out of 5 points, leading to a final score out of 40 per reviewer. Each of the criteria is equally weighted. In addition, reviewers will have to justify their scoring via written comments. In order to manage the expected high number of applications, the total score will be subject to a threshold. In order to meet this threshold proposals need a total score (sum of all scores) of 28 points (70%). The scoring is explained below:

- 0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information
- 1 Poor – criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- 2 Fair – proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses
- 3 Good – proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present
- 4 Very good – proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
- 5 Excellent – proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

In order to maintain fairness and ensure a coherent evaluation process peer reviewers will be asked to allocate scores strictly according to the scoring scale.

5. Ethical Issues

Compliance with the relevant ethics provisions is essential from the beginning to the end of the fellowship and is an integral part of any research funded by the European Union within Horizon 2020.

The Ethics Self-Assessment Table is a mandatory part of the Research Proposal Application Form. For every question where the answer is “yes”, applicants need to elaborate and provide extra information. Applicants should demonstrate proactively in their applications that they are aware of, and will comply with, ethical principles and applicable international, European and national law.

Main ethical principles:

- Respecting human dignity and integrity
- Ensuring honesty and transparency towards research subjects and notably getting free and informed consent (as well as assent whenever relevant)
- Protecting vulnerable persons
- Ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- Promoting justice and inclusiveness
- Minimising harm and maximising benefit
- Sharing the benefits with disadvantaged populations, especially if the research is being carried out in developing countries
- Maximising animal welfare, in particular by ensuring replacement, reduction and refinement ('3Rs') in animal research
- Respecting and protecting the environment and future generations

Please note that prior ethical approval is not necessary at application stage.

Information on the University of Vienna's Ethics Committee and the application process for gaining ethics approval from the Committee will be provided for successful applicants where ethical issues apply.

Even where the applicant does not foresee any ethical issues and states so in the application, the peer-reviewers and Selection Committee will give their opinion on whether ethical issues need to be addressed. If so, the applicant will be requested to provide more information on the ethics issues in the project. This will be discussed in depth in the interview.

All fellows will be required to provide interim reports for the project in which they will need to explain how any ethical issues are being addressed.

For further information please contact us via e-mail: rewire@univie.ac.at