

Receiver(s): Local research committees ST, supervisors ST

Memo

Regarding: Marie Skłodowska-Curie Master Class 2017

1. Introduction

The ST Research Committee has launched a pilot project – **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Master Class (MCM)** – that aims to secure more European Fellowships under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme in Horizon 2020, and attract talented young researchers to Science and Technology. The project initially extends through 2016 and 2017.

MBK/MAJ

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Potential Marie Curie Fellows are invited to Aarhus University in May to meet their supervisor and host group, get help with their application, and be introduced to Aarhus University and Denmark as a country to work in (provisional programme attached).

An important parameter in a competitive application for European Fellowships is the match between the project, the future fellow, and the host group. The Master Class provides an opportunity for the fellow to meet the supervisor and discuss the project, as well as enabling the future fellow to experience the host group's research environment and attend a workshop aimed at the constituent elements of the application itself.

The role of the supervisor

The supervisor finds candidates for the Master Class via networks, conferences, international/European projects or advertising. The supervisor is the research or project manager. The supervisor submits a brief application (template attached) to the local research committee. The applications must include a general description of the project and briefly explain how the project and the academic environment at ST will contribute to the fellow's further career development. An updated CV and a list of publications must be attached, as well as contact information for the candidate.

The supervisor must be present during the MCM on 16–18 May 2017. It is important that the supervisor and the future fellow discuss the project prior to the Master Class in May to ensure that they benefit from the event. The supervisor is responsible for organising a programme (including meals) for the time spent by the candidates at the departments (where there is no joint programme), and contributes to the application as well as acting as a mentor (throughout the whole procedure from the application stage to carrying out any projects and making a report).

The role of the local research committee

The local research committee provides information about the project, encourages local support, and nominates candidates on the basis of proposals from supervisors.

The local research committee is responsible for ensuring that a brief assessment of the applicants is prepared, and that qualified applicants are nominated to the steering committee at the faculty. An assessment is made of whether the candidates are sufficiently qualified to be awarded a Marie Curie Fellowship. Each department is granted up to 4 candidates from Europe and 1 candidate from outside Europe. The nomination must state whether the department itself wishes to finance other participants in addition to the 5 candidates granted by the faculty.

2. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions in Horizon 2020

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Individual Fellowships (MSCA-IF) – aim to promote the creative and innovative potential of researchers wanting to strengthen and extend their individual expertise via *‘advanced training, international and intersectoral mobility’*.

European Fellowships

European Fellowships (EF) take place in a European or associated country. There is no thematic framework that must be met. Projects in all subject areas are accepted (bottom-up).

EF applications are aimed at one of 8 overall scientific panels (CHE – Chemistry, SOC – Social Sciences and Humanities, ECO – Economic Sciences, ENG – Information Science and Engineering, ENV – Environment and Geoscience, LIF – Life Sciences, MAT – Mathematics, PHYS – Physics). It is also possible to address the application to one of 3 specific panels. They have the following purposes: 1. to promote reintegration in European research (RI – Reintegration Panel), 2. to resume a research career (CAR – Career Integration Panel) or 3. to promote career paths between academia and industry (SE – Society and Enterprise Panel).

The scientific panels, as well as the RI and CAR panels, have a total budget of EUR 179.5 million in 2016 and EUR 205 million in 2017. The SE panel has an independent budget of EUR 10 million in 2016 and 2017, respectively.

MSCA-IF overview

INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS		EUROPEAN			
		Standard EF	CAR	RI	SE
EXPERIENCED RESEARCHERS	Nationality	ANY	ANY	MS, AC or long-term residents	ANY
	Mobility	From ANY country to MS or AC	From ANY country to MS or AC	From TC directly to MS or AC	From ANY country to MS or AC
		< 12 months in the last 3 years	< 36 months in the last 5 years	< 36 months in the last 5 years	< 36 months in the last 5 years
	Career break in research	-	≥ 12 months prior to call deadline	-	-
PARTICIPANTS	Beneficiary	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC Non-academic only
	Partner Organisation	MS or AC (optional secondments)	MS or AC (optional secondments)	MS or AC (optional secondments)	MS or AC (optional secondments)
DURATION (months)		12 - 24	12 - 24	12 - 24	12 - 24
SCIENTIFIC AREAS		8	8	8	8
NUMBER OF RANKING LISTS		8	1	1	1

The table is based on the 2016 notice. No changes are expected to the formal requirements.

Target group – fellows

MSCA-IF has no requirements regarding nationality or age. On the other hand, applicants are required to have a minimum of 4 years of research experience or a PhD degree. The typical applicant has some postdoctoral experience, but this is not a competitive parameter.

Expected effect of MSCA-IF

The Commission has some clear expectations to the MSCA-IF programme, and it is important to keep these in mind when writing applications. The following is directly copied from the work programme for 2016–2017.

Expected impact

At researcher level:

- Increased set of skills, both research-related and transferable ones, leading to improved employability and career prospects both in and outside academia
- Increase in higher impact R&I output, more knowledge and ideas converted into products and services
- Greater contribution to the knowledge-based economy and society

At organisation level:

- Enhanced cooperation and stronger networks
- Better transfer of knowledge between sectors and disciplines
- Boosting of R&I capacity among participating organisations

At system level:

- Increase in international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of researchers in Europe
- Strengthening of Europe's human capital base in R&I with more entrepreneurial and better trained researchers
- Better communication of R&I results to society
- Increase in Europe's attractiveness as a leading destination for R&I
- Better quality research and innovation contributing to Europe's competitiveness and growth

Evaluation process

All applications that fulfil the formal requirements are evaluated by at least three external experts. The evaluators score each constituent element in the applications (Excellence, Impact and Implementation) from 0 to 5 based on criteria determined in the work programme. A consensus meeting between the external evaluators determines the total score, and the subsequent panel meeting establishes a ranking list for the applications above the threshold level of 70%.

A share of the overall budget is allocated to each panel, corresponding to the number of applications received by the panel. Starting from the top of the ranking list, support is granted until the budget has been used up.