

FJL Postdoctoral Fellowships

Application guidelines

Important dates:

- **December:** Announcement of the call and opening of the online application system.
- **End of February:** Deadline for submission. Specific date will be announced on the website.
- **March: Eligibility check**
- **April:** Evaluation of the application by a panel of experts.
- **June:** Communication of results to the applicants.

Electronic application submission

Applications should be submitted through our [online management system](#).

Please follow the link [APPLY NOW FOR A POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP](#) on our [website](#).

Contacts

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Aim and scope

The Fondation Jérôme Lejeune initiates, develops and finances fundamental, translational and clinical research programs in Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities of genetic origin with early onset. The Fondation supports innovative research that will deepen our understanding of these disorders and that can lead to the discovery and development of therapies and treatments.

The FJL postdoctoral fellowships are aimed to support the career development of outstanding young scientists working on fundamental, translational and clinical aspects of Down syndrome.

Research topics supported

Research proposals must fall within the priority research areas defined by the Jerome Lejeune Foundation strategic plan. The 2023-2024 call for FJL Postdoctoral Fellowships is aiming at supporting promising young scientists working in the following topic:

Down syndrome and *co-occurring disorders*

Namely, pathologies that are present also in the general population and for which people with Down syndrome are at increased risk such as Alzheimer's disease, autism, leukaemia, epilepsy, hypotonia, immune disorders. Projects must focus on understanding relevant aspects (fundamental and/or clinical) of these co-occurring conditions in the context of Down syndrome. Projects with a therapeutic goal (mid or long-term) or dedicated to the search of direct/indirect biomarkers will also be considered. Collaborations with the Biobank BioJeL are encouraged if discussions for access to samples or to the Institut Jérôme Lejeune's database have been initiated prior to the submission. Only research projects focusing on the above topic will be considered for funding.

Duration and Funding

- 1) Fellowships are awarded for a maximum of two years to carry out their research project.
- 2) Fellows are awarded a fellowship amounting to € 130.000*.
- 3) Payments are made in three instalments to the host institution:
 - a. An initial payment (50 % of the fellowship amount) is made when the fellow starts the research project.
 - b. A second payment (40 % of the fellowship amount) is made at 12 months, following the reception of the intermediate report (see terms and conditions).
 - c. A final payment (10 % of the fellowship amount) is made following reception of the final report (see terms and conditions).
- 4) Fellows must start their project no later than seven months after approval of the fellowship (no exceptions possible).
- 5) The fellowship is mainly intended to cover the salary of the researcher. However, if the salary costs are lower than the fellowship amount, it is permitted to use the fellowship to cover academic communication activities (conferences, workshops, publication costs), small equipment and/or resources and other justified expenses within the scope of the research project.

*For some particular countries the fellowship amount can be adjusted in accordance to national postdoctoral salaries. Negotiation is subject to the reception of an official request by the host institution indicating the current national or institutional legislation regarding the salary grid for postdoctoral fellows.

Eligibility

Applicants of any nationality must hold a PhD degree or equivalent (MD, ...) at the start of the fellowship, but not necessarily at the time of the application.

- Applicants who already hold a PhD degree are eligible up to six years after obtention of their PhD degree. Exceptions are made for applicants with career breaks due to parental leave, mandatory military/civil service or illness.
- A past, present or planned mobility period (ideally international) is a plus.
- The host laboratory must have proven experience and publications in the field of Down syndrome.
- The host laboratory can present only one candidate per session. If more than one application is submitted, all applications from the same host laboratory will be disqualified.
- Applicants may only submit one application, for one project, to one host laboratory in each call.
- Re-submission with the same project is permitted only once, regardless of a change of host laboratory.
- Applicants who have already received a FJL Postdoctoral fellowship in the past are not eligible, regardless of a change of project or host laboratory.
- Applicants with a permanent position are not eligible.
- The request should fall within the topic of the fellowship. Proposed projects must address academic basic or medical research and not "Research & Development" linked to commercial development. However, applications to develop a basic research project within an industrial or for-profit research laboratory are eligible.

Application process

Applications for a FJL Postdoctoral Fellowship are accepted via the FJL online application system.

The application deadlines will be announced on the website at the beginning of December.

Complete applications will be evaluated in the Spring and results will be announced in June.

The online application system will be open in December. Applicants need to register for a FJL online application account. Once the registration email has been received, applicants can start an application.

Applications must be written in English and follow the formatting and structure outlined below.

Structure of the project file

Formatting:

- Maximum 6 pages including figures. Ethical statements, references and annexes do not count on the page limit.
- Font: Arial, 10
- Line spacing: single spaced.
- Page: A4 and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 15 mm.
- Include a header with the applicant's last name and year of the call.
- Format: PDF

Projects not respecting the above criteria will not be considered.

A template is available in the online application system and on the website:

<https://www.research.fondationlejeune.org/post-doctoral-grants/>

Content:

- 1- Project title.**
- 2- General presentation.** Including scientific/clinical background, state-of-the-art and rationale of proposed work.
- 3- Overall aim and key objectives.**
- 4- Research methodology and approach.** including experimental methods, techniques and statistical analyses to be used. When applicable, describe and justify the choice of animal model (two murine models, if applicable).
- 5- Originality and innovative character.**
- 6- Impact in the field and potential therapeutic/clinical applications.**
- 7- Work plan/time schedule.** A Gantt chart should be included.
- 8- Team description and feasibility of the work, including budget description for the whole project**
- 9- Ethical statement:** Please write a maximum ½ page indicating the ethical aspects of the proposed work if applicable (e.g. work on animal models and/or human subjects) and a statement of compliance with all applicable international, national, and/or institutional standards.
- 10- References.** Use a full citation style for all the references. Please highlight team publications and include DOI or active PubMed links for the team publications only.
- 11- Annexes:**
 - Short bio of the future research supervisor.
 - List of the main publications from the host laboratory for the last 5 years.
 - Letter of acceptance from the Head of the host laboratory.

- One or two letters of recommendation with contact details and signature of the referees. One letter of recommendation must come from the candidate's supervisor in the laboratory of origin.

Evaluation and selection process

The most important evaluation criteria applied by the evaluation panel of the FJL Postdoctoral Fellowships are scientific excellence of the candidate, the research project and the host institution.

Applications will initially be checked to ensure that they meet all the eligibility criteria for the fellowship. Applications not meeting the eligibility criteria will be rejected at this time.

Applications will be evaluated and ranked by a panel of experts composed of external experts and members of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune Scientific Advisory Board. Selection will be primarily on:

- Applicant's CV and performance based on reference letters.
- The project's scientific excellence, novelty, feasibility, biological significance and potential impact on clinical or therapeutic applications.
- The suitability of the host institution for the proposed research.

The Scientific Advisory Board will review and approve the ranking proposed by the panel of experts.

The Board of Directors of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune will take the final decision based upon the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board and external reviewers.

Terms and conditions

Financing terms

- Funding duration: 24 months.
- The starting date of the fellowship must be no later than 7 months after the month of award (no exceptions possible).

Reporting

Fellows commit to submit a scientific and financial report at 12 months into the fellowship (intermediate report). A final report is due upon completion of the project, including all relevant outcomes (publications, patents, etc.).

Commitments

Applicants agree to the following principles:

1. That none of the research work in the above-mentioned research project uses human embryos, human embryonic stem cells, human tissues, human cells obtained as a result of human abortion or human *in vitro* fertilization, or any other biological material of embryonic or foetal origin, especially when using gene libraries.
2. That no research, within the framework of this research project:

- genetically modifies gametes or cells from the human germline;
- creates human gametes, human embryos, human embryonic development models, synthetic embryos (in particular embryoids, blastoids, perigastruloids, synthetic embryos, or any other entity created with or without fertilization and having embryonic characteristics), human embryos modified by the addition of pluripotent animal cells, animal embryos modified by the addition of human pluripotent cells whatever the technique used;
- involves human cloning techniques.

3. To use or make use in the research work of this research project, alternatives to human embryonic stem cells and alternatives to the human embryo.

4. That the results of the work carried out as part of the research project are not published in a scientific publication with the results of work outside the research project which does not comply with the provisions of the present article.

5. Not to resort to one or more co-financing sources to carry out, within the framework of this research project, work contrary to the provisions of the present article.

In the absence of an alternative of comparable efficacy and subject to the prior agreement of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, the use of the HEK 293 cell line is permitted within the framework of the research work of this Research Project. The use of this line is however left to the discretion of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune.

- Within the statutory framework of its recognized public utility purpose, the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune defends life from conception to natural death. This is why the present clause is an essential obligation of the Agreement. Its violation will lead to the immediate termination of the Agreement and the restitution of all the sums paid by the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. Researchers must adhere to the highest standards of research practice and integrity and follow academic, national and international standards of Good Scientific Practice (GSP), Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) and/or Good Clinical Practice (GCP). Research Project must be carried out in accordance with all the legal, health and safety, ethical and regulatory requirements relevant to the field.
- For research involving human subjects and/or model organisms, all ethical approvals and licences required to carry out the research must be obtained prior to the commencement of the study and must be in place throughout the research. When research involves human subjects, researchers are obliged to protect the rights, interests and safety of research participants.

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

- In the scope of its research mission related to genetic intellectual disabilities, the Jerome Lejeune Foundation, as data controller, collects the personal data from the researchers who are applying. The data or information highlighted by an asterisk are mandatory for the processing of your application. The other data or information are optional and will be used, when provided by the applicant, for the production of our internal statistics. Other data related to the applicant and available from the public domain (for instance references of scientific publications) may be collected as well by the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune.
- The processing of personal data from researchers is performed for the legitimate purpose of supporting the evaluation of the application and the selection of the candidates, the management of the relationship with applicants and successful candidates, as well as the promotion of the research projects and of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune.

- We do not transmit the personal data from researchers to any recipient other than the members of the staff of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune in charge of the management of the research projects, or the members of the Scientific Committee, or our partner in charge of the maintenance of the IT application and working under a GDPR compliant contract.
- The data is stored for the duration of the research project. Then, they are archived, restricted to the minimum information required for long term retention for internal statistics use, and access is restricted only to the administrator from the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. Your account is also inactivated unless other applications are still in progress.
- Some of your personal data might be processed by international organisations. These data transfer relies on European Commission adequacy decisions (https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-topic/data-protection/international-dimension-data-protection/adequacy-decisions_en) or on adopted Standard Contractual Clauses adopted by European Commission (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2021/914/oj?hl=en_US).
- Data processing does not involve the existence of automated decision-making, including profiling.
- If you are a researcher concerned by the processing of your data, you can at any time exercise your right to object to it, or your right to ask for its restriction. You can also exercise a right of access, a right to rectification or to erasure of your data. For any request please contact us at the email address dpo@fondationjeune.org.
- You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the data protection supervisory authority from the country where you are established. Please consult the web site <https://edpb.europa.eu> to find more information about your supervisory authority.