



## LIFE SCIENCE ALLIANCE

### Bridging Excellence Fellowship Guidelines

The EMBL | Stanford [Life Science Alliance](#) is an inter-institutional research dedicated to the advancement of biomedical research. By bringing together researchers from two leading institutions, we hope to cultivate new ideas, share best practices, and facilitate access to new technologies and resources. In doing so, we are enabling our members to use their combined knowledge to tackle some of the toughest and most complex challenges in the life sciences.

The Bridging Excellence Postdoctoral Program is a joint postdoctoral program between **EMBL** and the **Stanford University School of Medicine (SoM)** and the **Stanford University School of Humanities and Sciences (H&S)**. Ambitious early stage scientists propose high-impact, creative collaborations between at least one lab from the Stanford SoM or H&S, and one lab from EMBL. By leveraging the opportunities at two leading institutions, fellows can gain valuable experience in two distinct research environments and develop as truly international researchers. As well as access to researchers and technology at both sites, fellows will also have the opportunity to take part in first rate training programs from both institutions.

#### Fellowships overview

Successful postdoctoral researchers will be awarded three-year fellowships from the EMBL | Stanford Life Science Alliance. Postdocs will be employed at EMBL for the duration of their fellowship and spend up to one year visiting their collaborators at Stanford. The fellowship includes funding for:

- A standard **3 year EMBL postdoctoral stipend** (including family allowances and social security benefits: [more information here](#)).
- A contribution towards **lab consumables** (*up to EUR 25,000*).
- A **travel and accommodation supplement** for visiting Stanford collaborators (*up to EUR 25,000*).
- Funds for attending an **international conference** (*up to EUR 2,000*).

Please read these applicant guidelines completely before submitting your application. By submitting your application, you are agreeing to comply with the conditions below.

## 1. Guidelines

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### 1.1. Eligibility

Bridging Excellence Fellowships are open to all researchers, regardless of nationality, gender, or scientific background.

Applicants must have **completed their PhD in the 5 years prior** to taking up the fellowship.

Postdoctoral fellows and students who are currently employed Stanford are able to apply. Fellows who are currently, or have previously been employed at EMBL are able to apply, provided an additional 3 year fellowship does not exceed the maximum limit of employment as a postdoctoral fellow at EMBL (5 years).

### 1.2. How to apply

Applications to the Bridging Excellence Postdoctoral Program are accepted via [EMBL's online recruitment system](#) (TalentLink).

Applicants must develop a proposal together with at least one **EMBL Group/Team Leader** and one **faculty member** from the **Stanford University School of Medicine** or the **Stanford University School of Humanities and Sciences**. Examples of existing collaborations can be found on our website. Our [members page](#) also lists faculty who are interested in supporting joint research proposals.

Proposals must describe a creative, high-impact collaboration that clearly builds on the strengths of the laboratories that are involved. They must clearly indicate how the project will draw on the expertise or technology available in each lab, as well as their own skills.

All applications must be submitted via TalentLink, using the supplied application form. Proposals that are not submitted using this form will be considered ineligible. Any modifications to the formatting guidelines will render the application ineligible. Your supervisors must also complete the letter of support for your application.

To apply for the program:

- Download the [application form](#).
- Establish contact with potential EMBL and Stanford supervisors.
- Develop your project proposal.
- Submit your application form and [letter of support](#) from your chosen supervisors and complete your application in [TalentLink](#) by **8th March 2020**.
- Ensure referees submit their recommendation by the **23rd of March 2020**.

Note, you can only submit one application via TalentLink. Once you have submitted your application, changes cannot be made.

### 1.3. Application guidelines

The following sections are included in the application:

- Personal details (via TalentLink)
- **Education** and previous **employment** (via TalentLink)
- **Publications**  
A list of your top 5 publications and a short summary including the research aims, your contributions and the significance. This can also include theses.
- **Research Experience**  
A short summary of your previous research experience to date.
- **Personal motivation**  
This is your own personal motivation for applying for a Bridging Excellence Fellowship. What excites you about our transatlantic program? Why are you a good candidate for conducting international science? How do you hope to benefit from this fellowship?
- **Reference details** and **project supervisors**  
(see 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 for more details).
- **Lay project description** to be published on the Life Science Alliance website if your application is successful.
- **Project proposal**  
Providing a description of your proposed research including: scientific background, objectives, methods, feasibility, and the scientific impact and significance of the study.
- **Milestones** for each year of your fellowship to be used for reporting on progress.
- **Rationale**  
This refers to the broader impact of your proposed research, and why you have chosen the particular EMBL and Stanford labs for your project. How do your skills combine with knowledge and technology available in the labs you have chosen? Will you develop new methods or technologies that will benefit both institutions? What is the benefit to both Stanford and EMBL of your project? How will your project promote collaborative science?

#### *1.3.1. Supervisor guidelines*

You must have at least one supervisor (group or team leader) from EMBL and one faculty member from the Stanford University SoM, or Stanford University H&S. You must have the approval of your chosen supervisors to apply for a Bridging Excellence Fellowship. Your primary EMBL and Stanford supervisors must complete the **letter of support** that must be uploaded with your application.

For each proposal that is unanimously supported, **at least one supervisor** will be required to take part in the first stage of the **evaluation process** as described below.

*Special note: Lars Steinmetz, director of the Life Science Alliance is not eligible to be listed as a supervisor on any application.*

### *1.3.2. Referee Guidelines*

You will be asked to provide the details of **two referees** via Talentlink. As soon as you submit your completed application, your referees will be emailed to ask for a letter of recommendation which needs to be submitted by **March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020**. Please therefore make sure your referees are aware of the deadline and have enough time to submit their letter. Applicants should have approval to use referee's and supervisor's data for their application.

You must have two letters of reference to support your application. The Life Science Alliance is not responsible for ensuring that your referees submit their letters of recommendation by the deadline.

## **1.4. Evaluation & Selection Process**

### *1.4.1. Evaluation*

All proposals will undergo a **two-stage evaluation** process. In the first evaluation stage, **supervisors** will engage in a peer-review evaluation to independently assess the pool of applicants based on **scientific excellence, project feasibility and timeliness**.

In the second evaluation stage, top-ranking proposals will be reviewed by written procedure by a **panel** comprising: the director of the Life Science Alliance and members of the advisory committee from both institutions. The members of the panel will first rank proposals independently, based on additional factors including: **applicant motivation, scientific impact and inter-institutional value** (Table One below indicates the evaluation criteria). Individual ratings will then be combined to give an overall candidate score. The panel will then jointly discuss the merits of top-ranking proposals in order to reach a consensus on which applicants to invite for interviews. Top candidates will be invited to attend an on-site interview (see below).

*Table 1 Potential evaluation criteria*

### 1.4.2. Selection

Applicants will be invited to interview in person at EMBL during the week of **May 4<sup>th</sup> 2020**. The **first day** of interviews will involve **visits to the host laboratory**, with partners joining meetings electronically.

On the **second day**, candidates will give a **presentation** on their current and previous research, then take part in a **panel interview**. During the panel interview, the candidate must give a second, short presentation on their **proposed research** and **motivation** for applying to be a Bridging Excellence Fellow. The panel will assess the applicant's **interest and motivation towards international training** in addition to **scientific impact** of the proposal.

At the end of the second day, the panel will rank the candidates, and fellowships will be offered to the top applicants. The remaining candidates will be placed on a waitlist. The panel will prepare written feedback for each candidate, to be shared with unsuccessful candidates once all the offers are accepted.

## 2. Conditions

### 2.1. Pre-award process

Once a fellowship has been accepted, the fellow must start **within 9 months of the interview date**. The fellow must gain any necessary ethics consent for their project prior to taking up their position. A budget for the use of consumable funds must also be submitted to the Life Science Alliance (templates will be provided).

### 2.2. Fellowship conditions

Fellows will receive an employment contract from EMBL for the entire duration of the fellowship. Fellows will be remunerated and receive benefits according to the **standard rates** at EMBL.

Candidate	Project	Collaboration
Academic performance	Feasibility	Project has clear benefit for both EMBL and Stanford
Appropriate background and training for project	Timeliness	Potential for methods, technology, or expertise to be transferred between institutes
References	High impact	Dissemination of knowledge through both institutions.
Compelling personal motivation for bridging excellence fellowship	Clear collaboration between both labs	Contributes to the overall inter-institutional relationship

The fellow will abide by the relevant policies of the EMBL, and of Stanford University when conducting the research visit(s). The fellows will have access to standard training opportunities, and any administrative support throughout the fellowship - i.e. fellows receive the same entitlements and treatment as other fellows at the institution.

EMBL is an inclusive, equal opportunity employer offering attractive conditions and benefits appropriate to an international research organisation with a very collegial and family friendly working environment. The remuneration package comprises a competitive salary, a comprehensive pension scheme, medical, educational and other social benefits. You can find more information about the employment conditions at [EMBL here](#).

### **2.3. Visiting the partner institution**

Fellows must spend **up to one year** at the partner institution. The first cohort of fellows employed at EMBL will visit Stanford for a minimum of 10 months and no more than 12 months during the 3-year fellowship. The visits can be distributed as necessary throughout the duration of the fellowship (i.e. up to 12 months total, or multiple visits totaling up to 12 months). The entitlements for the travel and relocation allowance will remain the same, regardless of the number of visits that occur.

The fellow must inform the programme officer **at least 4 months prior** to their visit. This will allow sufficient time to organize the required travel and relocation plans, visas, and any other administrative matters.

During the visit(s), fellows will take up the position of **visiting postdoctoral scholar** at Stanford University. The programme officer will assist fellows in registering as a visitor at the partner institution, but fellows must take responsibility to complete necessary documents for this process. For visitors to Stanford, the process involves registering as a visiting postdoctoral scholar as outlined in the University's [research policy handbook](#). Fellows must sign the Stanford SU18A form regarding the sharing of intellectual property. The fellow's salary and benefits will continue to be paid by the host institution at the standard rates.

### **2.4. Training**

The fellows, together with their supervisors, must submit a project proposal and **career development** plan within 6 months of taking up the fellowship. We recommend that fellows meet with an **EMBL Career Development Advisor** during this time to identify training and career development opportunities that would be beneficial during the fellowship. The fellow's development will be reported on annually thereafter (see section 5.3 below).

Fellows are able to take part in standard EMBL training courses, as well as any external courses. While holding a position as visiting postdoctoral scholars at Stanford University, fellows are also able to take part in professional development programs.

At any point during the fellowship, the fellow has the opportunity to request funds from the Life Science Alliance for **attending and presenting** their research at an **international conference**. The fellow must inform the programme officer in advance of the conference so that the respective financial arrangements can be made.

## 2.5. Reporting

**Fellows** must submit an **annual progress report** to the programme officer on anniversary of their employment. These reports must provide a brief outline of their **scientific progress** in relation to the initial milestones, any **training** activities that have been undertaken, and a general plan for the coming year. A breakdown of the year's **expenditure** in broad categories including consumables, conferences and travel/relocation allowance must be provided. The fellow is welcome to give feedback on the programme at this point, or highlight any concerns. This will help The Life Science Alliance monitor the progress of the pilot programme and improve successive funding rounds.

## 2.6. Communications & Acknowledgements

Successful fellows must use the title “**Bridging Excellence Fellow**” as their official title in correspondence. Fellows and members must acknowledge “**the Life Science Alliance**” in any publications, presentations, interviews, posters and other articles arising from the joint project. The acknowledgement below is our suggested wording:

*“This work is supported by a Bridging Excellence Fellowship provided by the Life Science Alliance.”*

The Life Science Alliance logo must be clearly visible on all project related communications where possible. In order to help promote the Life Science Alliance, fellows must inform the Life Science Alliance of any communications (publications, presentations etc.) arising directly from their postdoc project before publication.

In order to help promote the Bridging Excellence fellowships, the fellow is expected to give a talk at the partner institution and **contribute a communications piece** on their inter-institutional experience. This could include an interview, article on international collaboration, a research update or other public engagement material. The programme officer will assist in this process.

## 2.7. Intellectual Property

Matters related to the exchange of knowledge and intellectual property that may arise from joint research projects between the partners within the EMBL | Stanford Life Science Alliance will be regulated on a case-by-case basis, in separate agreements per each joint research project.

## 2.8. Data Protection

Personal data, the personal data of the referees and supervisors, stemming from all fellowship applications will be processed according to EMBL Internal policy 68 on General Data Protection, for the purpose of evaluating the applications and if successful entering into a contract with EMBL. Applicants should have approval to use referees and supervisor’s data for the application form.

Processing of these data will be managed by EMBL Human Resources department, representing the controller under EMBL Internal policy 68 and upon the applicants aim to enter into a contract with EMBL to start the fellowship program. The applicant’s personal data will be made available to EMBL Life Science Alliance, to panel members and interviewers, actively involved in the recruitment process and to some EMBL departments to facilitate the recruitment process. Moreover the applicants personal data will be shared with Lumesse GmbH, a German company, providing on-line recruitment tool TalentLink where applications will be submitted. Applications will be stored for 5 years, however if successful the applicant’s personal data will be stored for much longer as part of their personal file.

Should the applicant have any request regarding processing of their data or should they wish to exercise their rights, e.g. to access, rectify, erase your personal data or to object to its processing , they may contact the Head of EMBL Human Resources department using the following email address: [recruitment@embl.org](mailto:recruitment@embl.org).

Advice regarding the applicant's rights can be obtained from the EMBL Data Protection Officer reached by email at [dpo@embl.org](mailto:dpo@embl.org). Moreover should the applicant wish to lodge a complaint, they can contact EMBL Data Protection Officer by email at [dpo@embl.org](mailto:dpo@embl.org).

## **2.9. Non-compliance**

If the fellow or the participating members are not compliant with the conditions of these fellowships, the Life Science Alliance may demand a complete or partial refund of the fellowship. Non-compliance will include use of funds outside of the scope of the original proposal, failure to submit reports in a timely manner, or any other contradictions to the above conditions.

### **Questions?**

For any questions related to the Bridging Excellence Fellowship or these guidelines, please contact us via email: [stanford@embl.de](mailto:stanford@embl.de)