

Kootstra Talent Fellowship (KTF) – Spring 2022

Introduction

In 2022, the Board of Maastricht UMC+ provides funding for the “Kootstra Talent Fellowship” (KTF) for postdocs. This year, there are two rounds of applications, with deadlines on April 1 and October 1, respectively.

Goal of the Fellowship

The KTF aims to facilitate talented researchers to develop **their own research ideas** and CV, and subsequently help increase their chances of obtaining personal grants at external funding agencies.

Therefore, the fellowship should be, amongst other things, be used to apply for personal grants such as Veni, Marie Curie, and Rubicon.

The call is open to:

1) researchers who obtained their PhD degree at the FHML of Maastricht University within one year of the application deadline, *or*

2) researchers who are finalizing their PhD at the FHML of Maastricht University.

Please note that (i) the KTF must start within six months of the grant being awarded, and (ii) the candidate’s PhD thesis must have been approved by the evaluation committee before the fellowship can start. No exceptions will be allowed, and the Board will withdraw the award when this timeline is not met. Researchers in training as a medical specialist, or ‘arts-assistant niet in opleiding’, who meet the above criteria can submit an application. Please note that written permission from the training head is required in this case.

The minimum duration of the KTF is 12 months. The maximal duration is 24 months, or (if earlier) until the date that a (personal) grant awarded by an external funding agency can take effect. Part-time employment (limited to 0.7 FTE) is possible. The duration of the fellowship can be extended pro-rata. The fellowship must commence within six months of the grant award, or on the day of written approval of the PhD thesis (in case the award precedes thesis approval).

The KTF will match half (50%) of each of the following costs, the remaining 50% should be matched by the candidate’s School/Institute:

- Salary costs - Scale 10-4 during the in the first year of the fellowship, and if applicable, scale 10-5 during the second year (or part thereof);
- Exploitation costs: €6.000 per year.

Application guidelines

The application deadlines for the KTF are April 1, 2022 and October 1, 2022. The application form is attached to this call. Applications can be submitted by email to the Grants Office of the Faculty of Health Medicine and Life (FHML) (grantsoffice-fhml@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Please arrange to have the scientific director of the School/Institute confirm her/his willingness and ability to provide the 50% matching in a supporting letter. Without this letter your application is not eligible.

PLEASE NOTE: The Schools/Institutes of FHML each have an internal selection process. Candidates are encouraged to inquire about this procedure in their own School/Institute. It is possible that the School/Institute has an internal deadline prior to the KTF closing date.

The Board of Directors decides which applicants will be awarded the KTF. The Maastricht UMC+ Research Committee (WMUMC+) acts as an advisory board in the review process (more info see: <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/about-um/faculties/health-medicine-and-life-sciences/research/maastricht-umc-research-committee>). The evaluation procedure will be completed within three months of the deadline.

Additional terms

The following additional conditions apply to the assessment of the applications:

- Applications are made by individual researchers (and not by duos or (research) groups).
- A candidate is allowed
 - o to submit a maximum of one application per round;
 - o to submit an application twice for a KTF.Eligibility of proposals will be checked upon submission (e.g. all sections need to be completed within the set word limit; given recent changes in the application form, only applications using the 2021 form are admissible). PLEASE NOTE: In case the word limit is exceeded, applications will not be taken into consideration.
- If an application taken into consideration is withdrawn during the assessment process, this submission counts towards the maximum number of submissions per applicant.
- Researchers awarded a KTF (for postdocs) cannot reapply.
- The funds are earmarked for the relevant candidate and cannot be transferred to other persons. After tenure of the KTF, laureates are required to submit a final report to the Board (S.Bastiaanssen@maastrichtuniversity.nl)
- The final report must outline which grants have been applied for and which grants have been awarded. In addition, please address the research plan, goal(s) and hypotheses, and timeline as described in the application. The evaluation must be submitted within 6 months after the end of the fellowship.
- A candidate can spend up to 50% of the duration of the fellowship abroad. Please note that a work visit abroad is not obligatory.

Extension clause

The maximum career deadline (1 year post PhD defense) can be extended by the board of FHML if the candidate has taken extended sick, parental, maternity or care leave. The maximum extension that may be granted to any particular applicant is one year. If you wish to apply for extension, please contact the Board before submitting your grant application (Board Secretariat FHML, S.Bastiaanssen@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Criteria

All KTF proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- A. Quality, innovative character and academic impact of the proposed research (40%)
- Independent research ideas
 - Challenging content;
 - Originality of the topic;
 - Innovative elements for Maastricht UMC+/School;
 - Effectiveness of the proposed methodology;
 - Knowledge utilization (scientific, societal and economic).
- B. Personal vision and motivation (20%)
- Clear vision of the researcher about his/her place in science;
 - Clear link between proposed research and career vision;
 - Appropriateness of short term (KTF) and long term (follow-up trajectory) career planning on vision for the future;
 - Contagious fascination for research;
 - Persuasiveness.

C. Quality of the researcher (40%)

In the top 25% of his/her international peer group.

Clear indications of an outstanding talent for academic research:

- **Education.**
For example: supervision, teaching roles, mentoring, assessments, contributions to content or coordination of education/programs/modules, quality of education (e.g. student evaluations).
- **Research.**
For example: research output (including peer reviewed publications), productivity (e.g. output i.r.t. work experience and actual time spent on research), recognition for work (e.g. prizes, grants and awards, invited presentations), Contributions to research field (theoretical, methodological, clinical).
- **Impact.**
For example: knowledge dissemination activities (including conference participation, public outreach) and layman publications.
Please note that these are not necessarily related to research.
- **Leadership.**
For example: research vision, collaborations and networking, international and/or interdisciplinary research activities, membership of boards/committees, organisation of e.g. conferences, workshops, involvement in organization of meetings, other (non-research) activities in group /institute, growth/potential towards independence.

Incomplete applications (notice the maximum word count) and applications without the supporting letter from the scientific director of the School/Institute will not be taken into consideration. If the conditions of the Kootstra Talent Fellowship grant are not met, the Executive Board Maastricht UMC+ reserves the right to retract the award.

Evaluation Procedure

The Executive Board Maastricht UMC+ decides which applicants will be awarded the KTF. The Maastricht UMC+ Research Committee (WMUMC+) acts as an advisory board in the review process. The evaluation procedure consists of three steps.

First, after you submit your proposal, an eligibility check will be performed to see whether your proposal meets all formal criteria for submission (e.g. word count) and whether it is complete (e.g. including requested letters). If your proposal does not meet all eligibility criteria, you MAY be given the opportunity to adapt that specific part of your proposal. However, do not count on this, and make sure you carefully check your final proposal against the eligibility and assessment criteria before submitting.

Second, in a preselection step, the WMUMC+ assesses all eligible proposals using the above stated criteria and their weight, resulting in a mean score for each of the three evaluation criteria: 1) quality, innovative character and academic impact of the proposed research (40%), 2) personal vision and motivation (20%), and 3) quality of the researcher (40%). All proposals will be ranked according to likelihood of funding. The candidates with the highest ranking are invited for an interview with the WMUMC+.

Third, during the interview, candidates have the opportunity to explain their proposal, vision and motivation. At the interview, candidates are scored on 1) the quality, innovative character and academic impact of the proposed research (30%), 2) their responses to questions and discussion with the committee (50%), and 3) the content and delivery of the presentation itself (20%), resulting in a final score.

Member(s) of the WMUMC+ with a conflict of interest regarding a specific KTF proposal for funding will be excluded from the assessment and the interview. A conflict of interest occurs when the member involved in the assessment has a personal, professional (e.g. supervisor) or organisational relationship with the applicant(s), affecting their ability to undertake their role in an objective and unbiased way.

More information

For more information and tips and tricks regarding the KTF, see the guidebook.

Please note that researchers can contact their School's funding advisor for support:

Marco Berndes – m.berndes@maastrichtuniversity.nl – MHeNS, SHE

Vivian Braeken – v.braeken@maastrichtuniversity.nl – CAPHRI

Anne Gilsing – anne.gilsing@maastrichtuniversity.nl – NUTRIM

Willem Wolters – w.wolters@maastrichtuniversity.nl – M4I, CARIM

Pan Xu – pan.xu@maastrichtuniversity.nl – GROW, MERLN

See also: <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/about-um/faculties/health-medicine-and-life-sciences/research/research-office/fund-your-research>

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