

RESPIRE4 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Deadline 4th call:
1 May 2023 (23:59 CEST)

Version 01.01.2023

RESPIRE4 - REspiratory Science Promoted by International Research Exchanges 4



This project has received funding from the European Union's (EU) Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 847462



Important Notes

- The RESPIRE4 programme falls under the Horizon 2020 programme (not the current Horizon Europe programme), therefore the specific Horizon 2020 requirements and definitions apply. Please check the requirements in this May 2023 Application Guidance carefully to ensure you are eligible under RESPIRE4.
- The United Kingdom (UK) and Switzerland are considered as Associate Countries for the specific purpose of RESPIRE4 as the latter falls under the previous Horizon 2020 programme (and not Horizon Europe).

Main RESPIRE4 definitions

EU Member States (MS): the current EU (European Union) Member States and their overseas departments (including Overseas Countries & Territories - OCT). Please also see section 2.1 below.

Horizon2020 (H2020) Associate Country (AC): a country which is party to an international agreement with the European Union, as identified in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013. The list of H2020 Associate Countries (as of 1 January 2017) can be found on the [EU website](#). The United Kingdom (UK) and Switzerland are considered as Associate Countries for the specific purpose of RESPIRE4 as the latter falls under the previous H2020 programme. Please also see section 2.1.

Europe: within the specific context of this programme, Europe means the EU Member States (MS) as well as the H2020 Associate Countries (AC).

H2020 Non-associated Third Country (TC): countries that are neither EU Member States (MS) nor associated to Horizon 2020 (AC). Please also see section 2.1.

RESPIRE4 European Fellowships (EF): fellowships lasting exactly 24 months, open to researchers of any nationality, either coming to Europe from any country in the world or moving within Europe. Please see also above-mentioned definition of Europe as well as section 2.

RESPIRE4 Global Fellowships (GF): fellowships lasting exactly 36 months, entailing an initial outgoing phase in a TC outside of Europe followed by a return phase to Europe. They are open only to nationals or long-term residents of MS or AC. Please see also above-mentioned definition of Europe as well as section 2.

Host centre: the legal entity employing, supervising and training the fellowship recipient during the RESPIRE4 fellowship. It is ultimately responsible for the fellowship recipient and the fellowship. For Global Fellowships, the main host centre is in principle that of the return phase to Europe. Please see also section 2.3.

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document provides quick answers based on the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#), which remains the reference document and should be carefully & fully read before applying.



European Vs. Global Fellowships

IMPORTANT: Please also refer to [Section 2 of the RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#).

- **Can the same candidate apply for both a RESPIRE4 European Fellowship and a RESPIRE4 Global Fellowship?**

No, under each call, a candidate can only submit one application and must choose between the 24-month European Fellowship OR the 36-month Global Fellowship. It is thus not possible to apply for both at the same time.

- **Where can I find out about the main differences and requirements of RESPIRE4 European Fellowships and RESPIRE4 Global Fellowships?**

Section 2 of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#) sets out the requirements and features of the two different types of RESPIRE4 fellowship, notably through the summary table in section 2.1.

- **Can candidates from any nationality apply?**

This is the case under RESPIRE4 European Fellowships, open to researchers of any nationality either coming to Europe (see “RESPIRE4 definitions” above) from any country in the world or moving within Europe.

On the other hand, under RESPIRE4 Global Fellowships, only nationals or long-term residents of EU MS or H2020 AC (see “RESPIRE4 definitions” above) can apply. Long-term residence means a period of legal and continuous residence within a MS or AC of at least 5 consecutive years. Periods of absence from the territory of the MS or AC shall be taken into account for the calculation of this period where they are shorter than 6 consecutive months and do not exceed in total ten months within this period.

- **How long should the fellowship research project last?**

The fellowship research project should last exactly 24 months for RESPIRE4 European Fellowships OR exactly 36 months for RESPIRE4 Global Fellowships. Applications that do not comply with the indicated duration for the specific fellowship type will be considered ineligible.

- **How many host countries are involved under 36-month Global Fellowships?**

36-month Global Fellowships entail two phases with two different host countries, two pre-registered host centres and two host supervisors, as follows:

- Initial outgoing phase in a TC (see “RESPIRE4 definitions” above) outside of Europe
- Followed by mandatory return phase to Europe (see “RESPIRE4 definitions” above) – return phase may not be more than 50% of total duration of fellowship.

- **What are the requirements for the return phase within 3-year Global Fellowships?**

The duration of the initial outgoing phase in the TC (see “RESPIRE4 definitions” above) is flexible, provided that the return phase to Europe (see “RESPIRE4 definitions” above) is not more than 50% of the total duration of the Global Fellowship. The return phase back to Europe is mandatory, in line with EU rules and in order to ensure knowledge transfer and re-integration into the European Research Area. For the return phase, researchers will have the possibility to return to any previous “home” centre (any centre hosting the researchers during their previous career) or any other centre, as long as it is based in Europe (see “RESPIRE4 definitions” above). All host centres also need to be pre-registered on the [RESPIRE4 Web Host Registry](#).



- **What is the status of Switzerland and the United Kingdom (UK) within RESPIRE4?**

The United Kingdom (UK) and Switzerland are considered as Associate Countries for the specific purpose of RESPIRE4 as the latter falls under the previous H2020 programme (and not Horizon Europe). This means that – under the H2020 RESPIRE4 - host centres in Switzerland and the UK can host fellowships recipients within 24-European Fellowships as well as the return phase of 36-month Global Fellowships. This relates to RESPIRE4; for queries concerning any other programme(s), please contact the coordinating organisation.

Eligibility

*IMPORTANT: Please also refer to **Section 3** of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#).*

- **Can candidates with past ERS fellowships apply?**

Candidates who have already been awarded any RESPIRE fellowships are not eligible. Applicants having received other ERS fellowships – except RESPIRE fellowships – are potentially eligible.

- **Can candidates from outside the domain of respiratory research apply? What type of research is considered?**

Applicants from any discipline (e.g. life sciences, engineering, mathematics, information technology, biochemistry, pharmacology, social sciences, health psychology, public health, implementation research) are highly encouraged to apply to carry out research in an area related to respiratory science/medicine, in line with the reference document, the [ERS 10 Principles for Lung Health](#). Applicants, host centres and applications with a broad range of methodological expertise are welcome across the spectrum of respiratory research from basic science, translational and clinical research to health systems and implementation research.

- **When can the fellowship start?**

The fellowship and the research project must start at the very earliest on 1 October 2023 and at the latest by the end of February 2024.

- **I am currently in the process of carrying out my PhD studies. However, the PhD will not be completed before the application deadline. Am I eligible?**

Candidates need to be in possession of a doctoral degree (PhD holders) at the time of application OR demonstrate having at least the equivalent of 4 years full-time research experience. In this case, as the PhD has not been completed, the candidate will thus need to demonstrate – by the time of the reference date of 1 May 2023 for the 4th call – that s/he has the equivalent of 4 years of full-time research experienced.

Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree, which would formally entitle him or her to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited or seconded, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate is or was ever envisaged. Periods of inactivity in research (e.g. unemployment, periods of employment outside research, parental or long-term sick leave) do not count towards the time of research experience, according to the EU definition.



- **I will have my PhD defence before the time of the reference date of 1 May 2023, but I will not have the official certificate in time to apply. Am I still eligible?**

Candidates need to be in possession of a doctoral degree (PhD holders) at the time of application OR demonstrate having at least the equivalent of 4 years full-time research experience. In this case, if the PhD has been officially awarded/completed and only the official certificate is missing, candidates can ask their university/institute for a confirmation (e.g. signed letter on headed paper) that the PhD has been formally awarded and all work has been completed by the time of the reference date of 1 May 2023 for the 4th call. Candidates can then upload this confirmation letter in the application online platform. The candidate should then subsequently send a copy of the official certificate as soon as available.

On the other hand, if – by the reference date of 1 May 2023 – a decision has yet to be taken with regard to the PhD (e.g. defence postponed, approval not finalised, etc), then the PhD would not be considered as awarded yet and the candidate may be deemed ineligible (unless s/he can prove 4 years of full-time research experience).

- **I do not have a 1st author paper yet, but I have submitted several papers for publication. Am I eligible?**

It is mandatory for candidates to have at least one 1st (or co-author) paper published (or accepted for publication) in an international peer-reviewed journal by the time of the reference date of 1 May 2023 for the 4th call. Papers that are in preparation, submitted, under revision are not eligible until they have been formally accepted for publication. If you have submitted a 1st author paper and it has been formally accepted for future publication, you are eligible, but proof/evidence of the acceptance will have to be provided. Posters and conference abstracts are in principle not considered as publications in an international peer-review journal.

- **What are the requirements in terms of transnational mobility?**

The applicant must move (or have moved) from the home country to the host country. More specifically, applicants must comply with the mandatory H2020 mobility rule: by the time of the reference date of 1 May 2023 applicants must demonstrate transnational mobility and must not have resided nor carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc) in the country of the host centre for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the reference date (i.e. reference period: 1 May 2020 – 1 May 2023). Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

This mobility rule applies differently depending on the fellowship option (European vs. Global fellowships) chosen by the applicant.

- **I am currently based at the Host Unit. Am I eligible to apply?**

Candidates already at their host country/centre may be eligible provided: that they comply with the Marie Skłodowska-Curie mobility rule and that they are not permanently employed by the host centre prior to applying.

Should they be eligible, they will nevertheless need to put forward a strong case and valid rationale (e.g. best centre for their project, added value for career development etc) for their choice, the aim of the fellowships being to promote transnational mobility, launch new projects, and establish new collaborations.



Allowances

IMPORTANT: Please also refer to [Section 10](#) of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#).

- **What is covered by the fellowship grant?**

The RESPIRE4 fellowship provides for the benefit of the selected fellowship recipient: a living allowance (adjusted to the country correction coefficient), a mobility allowance and – if applicable – a family allowance. In addition, host centres receive a management cost contribution towards the management of the fellowship.

- **Are bench fees or research costs covered by the RESPIRE4 fellowship grant?**

Apart from the allowances for the benefit of the selected fellow (living, mobility and – if applicable – family) as well as the management cost contribution for host centres, no additional funding is available for items such as overheads, bench fees and the research project. It is up to host centres to ensure internally – prior to the fellowship application – that adequate resources/funds to cover these types of items are in place as well as to ensure the delivery of the research project, in relation to the specific applicant. Applicants and host centres should discuss these details already at the application phase.

- **Is there a family allowance?**

Yes, a family allowance is provided within RESPIRE4 if applicable. The yearly gross amount (flat rate) is € 6'000.- and this may be taxable depending on the country/centre. Family is defined – within the framework of the EU H2020 - as persons linked to the researcher by: 1) marriage or 2) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognized by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalized or 3) dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher. The candidate needs to comply with one of the three definitions of family allowance by the reference date of 1 May 2023.

Host Centres & Web Host Registry

IMPORTANT: Please also refer to [Sections 2 & 3](#) of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#).

- **How shall I select the host centre(s)?**

All host centres need to be pre-registered and be listed on the RESPIRE4 Web Host Registry in order to participate in RESPIRE4; this is the case for both European and Global Fellowships. A pre-registered list of hosts in the form of a new and ever-expanding [Web Host Registry platform](#) has been launched specifically for RESPIRE4 to facilitate the applicant's search for suitable centres. A number of host centres are already listed, and further ones can still apply until closer to the 4th call deadline.

It remains up to fellowship applicants to identify, search and get in touch with the most suitable host centre(s) in terms of their research project and their career development, to discuss a potential cooperation and to submit the fellowship online application, in liaison with the host supervisor/centre. The objective is to enable researchers to develop their own research project via a bottom-up individually-driven approach, according to their areas of research interest. Applicants should also bear in mind the requirements of the type of fellowship chosen (European vs. Global Fellowships) with regard to location as well as the mandatory Marie Skłodowska-Curie mobility rule.



- **Is a host centre, pre-registered in the past under the previous RESPIRE2 or RESPIRE3, automatically listed for RESPIRE4 too?**

Host centres already listed for the previous RESPIRE2 or RESPIRE3 programme are not automatically pre-registered for the new RESPIRE4. Due to the new administrative requirements, in line with H2020, host centres need to apply to confirm compliance specifically for RESPIRE4 by submitting the [Host Online Application Form](#) (section A + section B). They will, however, benefit, from a fast-track procedure as they will not need to undergo a scientific review.

- **I am interested in going to a specific host centre, which is currently not listed. Can it be added to the list?**

Potential fellowship applicants are able to freely propose new centre(s) not listed as long as the latter confirms compliance with the RESPIRE4 host centre's commitments and undergoes the relevant review process, if applicable, by submitting the [Host Online Application Form](#) (section A + section B). This should ideally take place well in advance of the fellowship application deadline of 1 May 2023 (4th call), by mid-April 2023 at the latest. However, please do not hesitate to contact the ERS Office (fellowships@ersnet.org) to further discuss this point.

- **My host centre is based outside of Europe and would like to be listed, is it possible?**

Yes, it is possible to list host centres based outside of Europe on the RESPIRE4 Web Host Registry thanks to the RESPIRE4 Global Fellowships. Host centres outside of Europe can take part in the initial outgoing phase (only) within Global Fellowships. Host centres should apply by submitting the [Host Online Application Form](#) (section A + section B).

- **Does the proposed host supervisor need to be listed as a contact person in the RESPIRE4 Web Host Registry?**

In the [RESPIRE4 Web Host Registry](#) at least two contact person(s) are indicated for each host centre, as put forward by each institution in their Host Online Application Form. The proposed host supervisor does not need to be necessarily one of the contact persons listed. However, in principle, potential applicants should get in touch with the contact person(s) indicated on the Web Host Registry in the first instance to discuss their potential application. Thereafter, it is crucial that the host supervisor is identified on the basis of his/her competences, knowledge and expertise linked to the area of the project proposal, but also taking into account his/her availability.

- **Can the same host centre apply with multiple applicants?**

There are no restrictions in terms of the number of fellowship applications in which a host centre/host lab is involved within the same call, it is up to each host centre to decide with which applicants they wish to collaborate. On the other hand, it will not be possible for all pre-registered host centres to be awarded a RESPIRE4 fellow due to the limited number of places available.

- **For Global Fellowships, for the return phase, is it possible that I return to the host centre in Europe where I am currently based at the time of the application?**

For the return phase of the Global Fellowship, the applicant can return to any previous home centre or any other centre, provided that it is based in Europe.



Application Process / Forms

IMPORTANT: Please also refer to Section 7 of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#).

- **How do I apply?**

Applications, with all supporting documents, must be submitted in English through the ERS online application platform (via myERS). The link & further information can be accessed via the [RESPIRE4](#) webpage. Upon submission, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement of receipt.

- **What if I do not have a myERS account or I have forgotten my password?**

Applicants can quickly and easily create a myERS account for free without needing to be ERS members, should they not have one already via [myERS](#). This only takes a few minutes, but it is needed to access the application form via myERS.

On the other hand, should applicants have already a myERS account but have forgotten their password, they can re-set it via [myERS](#).

- **What should I do in case of technical problems with the form?**

First, you can try to use a different internet browser as this may help to solve the problem. Otherwise, please contact the ERS Office (fellowships@ersnet.org). You are highly advised to leave sufficient time to complete the application process.

- **What documents need to be submitted, beyond the online application form?**

Apart from completion and submission of the online application form, applicants are asked to upload a number of documents by the application deadline. These are listed in section 7 of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#) as well as within the online application form itself (under the "Files" section). Some of the forms / documents need to be filled out and signed by the host/home supervisors. The applicant is responsible for uploading all the necessary documents on the application form by the deadline, therefore s/he should leave plenty of time for this process and have all documents ready well in advance.

- **In what format do documents need to be submitted?**

All documents to be submitted under section "Files" of the online application platform need to be uploaded in pdf format.

- **What are the expectations in terms of the Lay summary?**

A lay summary (1 page max, font size 12 pts Arial or Times New Roman) needs to be uploaded within the online application platform. This document is different from the scientific Project Description. The lay summary should be written in plain English and in a such way that a non-scientist can easily understand the aims, outcomes and potential relevance to future practice (e.g. patients), in line with H2020's focus on outreach. We strongly advise that applicants read the following advice on writing lay summaries, from [Breathe](#), [NIHR](#) and [Elsevier](#). The level of language should be aimed at around 8-10 years, this is commonly the target level at which mainstream newspapers are written, so consider this when writing. The [Hemingway App](#) is useful to check and simplify writing; we strongly recommend that you double check your lay summary with this tool before submitting it.



- **For Global Fellowships, is the Host Declaration Commitment Form and supporting documents needed for both the two host centres?**

Yes, for Global Fellowships, the Host Declaration Commitment Form should be provided by each one of the two host supervisors/centres: the one for the initial outgoing phase and the one for the return phase to Europe. Failure to do so will result in the application being considered ineligible.

- **Can the home supervisor return the Home Supervisor Reference Form directly to ERS?**

The Home Supervisor Reference Form is the only form that can be sent directly and confidentially to ERS (fellowships@ersnet.org), by the home supervisor (or equivalent). Or alternatively they can be completed, signed and returned to the applicant, for the latter to upload on the application online form. In both cases, the applicant is responsible for timely submission.

- **For the purposes of my application, does the home supervisor needs to be my current supervisor?**

The home supervisor refers to, in most cases, the applicant's current supervisor at the home centre where s/he is currently based. However, it is also possible to put forward one of the applicant's past supervisors (e.g. PhD supervisor, etc) or equivalent, provided that the person can act as a referee through the Home Supervisor Reference Form and comment on the applicant's work, in relation to the proposed research project. In general, it is up to the applicant to identify the most relevant person for the purpose of this application and contact him/her.

For applicants already at the host centre, should they be eligible, they should identify a past supervisor from another centre as their 'home supervisor', for the purposes of this application. In any case, the home supervisor cannot be the same person as the host supervisor proposed for the fellowship.

- **For Global Fellowships, who should be my home supervisor if – after the initial outgoing phase – I will return to the host centre in Europe where I am currently based at the time of application?**

For Global Fellowships, the person identified as home supervisor should ideally not be connected with the two host centres (outgoing phase & return phase), so as to provide an independent reference through the Home Supervisor Reference Form.

- **What are the ethics areas to be covered in the online application form?**

The main ethics issues that must be addressed in the online application platform (section on 'Ethics') are, as identified by the EU for H2020, and depending on the nature of the proposed research project: *human embryos/foetuses (in particular human embryonic stem cells), human participants, human cells and tissues, personal data, Non-EU countries, environment & health and safety, dual use and misuse, use of animals in research, and other (e.g. research integrity)*. Please also refer to the Section 5 of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#).



Evaluation

IMPORTANT: Please also refer to Section 8 of the [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#)

- **How will my application be evaluated?**

Following eligibility checks, submitted applications that are considered eligible, will be evaluated through a step-by-step evaluation process:

- An evaluation process with in-depth review of the application and supporting documents, with remote scoring and shortlisting by ERS College of Experts members. Reviewers are already asked at this stage to comment on ethics and potential ethics concerns.
- An interview process with shortlisted applicants by the ERS Fellowships & Awards Working Group panel and ERS Fellowships & Awards Director. Shortlisted applications will also undergo a more in-depth ethics review in parallel.
- Final selection will be passed on to the ERS Science Council for validation. The final endorsement will be made by the ERS Executive Committee.

- **When are the interviews taking place?**

Interviews are currently provisionally planned online on 10-11 July 2023. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by early July 2023.

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by panel of 5-6 interviewees from the ERS Fellowships & Awards Working Group led by the ERS Fellowships & Awards Director. A patient representative and/or European Lung Foundation (ELF) also participate in the interviews as observers (meaning that they do not score the applicants but can ask questions).

- **When is the final decision expected?**

Following the interview process, the interview panel will put forward a proposal with recommendations for the selection of RESPIRE4 fellowship recipients to the ERS Science Council, to then be ratified by the ERS Executive Committee. Applicants will be informed by mid-August 2023 of the final outcome of their application and will then receive feedback from the evaluation process (peer-review and – if applicable – interview).

FOR ANY ENQUIRIES, PLEASE REFER TO THE [RESPIRE4 Application Guidance](#)

OR, ALTERNATIVELY, THE ERS OFFICE: fellowships@ersnet.org.

Kindly submit your queries well in advance to ensure adequate time to reply