

# LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowships

**APPLICATION GUIDE**

**2023**

Let's pave the way  
for curing skin diseases



**LEO FOUNDATION**

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**LEO FOUNDATION**

# Information about the call

## LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowships

**Award amount:** DKK 12 million over 5 years

**Application form opens:** 16 May 2023

**Application deadline:** 17 August 2023 16.00 CEST

**Interviews with invited candidates:**

- 24 October 2023: Interviews with top-ranked applicants for the theme Skin immunology and inflammatory skin diseases.
- 25 October 2023: Interviews with top-ranked applicants for the theme Skin physiology and cutaneous drug delivery.

**Applicant notification:** November 2023

**Earliest start date:** 1 January 2024

**Latest start date:** 1 January 2025

**[www.leo-foundation.org/dr-abildgaard-fellowships](http://www.leo-foundation.org/dr-abildgaard-fellowships)**

### Contact:

Lars Kruse

Senior Scientific Officer

Phone: +45 30 46 42 91

E-mail: [lars.kruse@leo-foundation.org](mailto:lars.kruse@leo-foundation.org)

Signe Rømer Holm

Scientific Officer

Phone: +45 53 70 66 18

E-mail: [signe.holm@leo-foundation.org](mailto:signe.holm@leo-foundation.org)

# LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowships 2023

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowships program is to support talented emerging research leaders in establishing or expanding an independent research group and pursuing novel and important research questions within skin and skin diseases.

The proposed research activities should be ambitious, creative, and hold a potential for high impact. The aim is to offer stable funding over a five-year period to allow the Fellow the freedom to adjust the scientific course as needed during the grant period and thus establish a clear and competitive research profile with momentum.

## **Supported areas of research**

The LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowship program is thematic. In 2023, applicants can apply within one of two research themes:

- **Skin immunology and inflammatory skin diseases**
- **Skin physiology and drug delivery**

The proposed research activities must have a clear focus and impact within one of the two themes and can be of a basic, translational, or clinical nature.

The LEO Foundation only supports investigator-initiated, independent clinical trials, i.e., trials that are conducted in collaboration with industrial partners or have potential commercial impact for industrial partners are not eligible for funding.

### **Skin immunology and inflammatory skin diseases**

The theme covers all elements of investigation and analyses of both innate and adaptive immunity in a cutaneous context, and all involved interactions with the surrounding environment. It also covers the basic, translational, and clinical understanding of skin immunology aspects, as well as the utilization of such knowledge to improve diagnosis and treatment of inflammatory skin diseases such as, e.g., psoriasis and atopic dermatitis. It may also include elements from overlapping fields like technology development, bioinformatics, epidemiology, or others, if they facilitate an improved understanding of skin immunology and/or inflammatory skin diseases.

### **Skin physiology and cutaneous drug delivery**

The theme covers investigations and analyses of the skin as an organ and its cellular and non-cellular components as well as its role as a structural, physical, and chemical barrier in both health and disease, with special emphasis on drug delivery. If relevant, and if it facilitates improved understanding of skin physiology and/or cutaneous drug delivery, elements of the proposed research program within neighboring and overlapping research fields may also be incorporated.

**NOTE ABOUT FUTURE THEMATIC CALLS FOR DR ABILDGAARD FELLOWSHIPS:**

It is the intention of the LEO Foundation to announce Fellowship calls within the 2023 themes again sometime in the future. In 2024, the Foundation plans to announce Fellowships calls within the following themes:

- Advanced therapeutics research in skin disease
- Systems medicine in dermatology

**Eligibility**

Applicants must be full-time employed at a Danish university, hospital, or other non-profit research institution during the grant period. Only minor or temporary affiliations with other institutions are allowed, and the necessity and synergy should be argued in the application.

Different eligibility criteria apply for different types of applicants:

- **Applicants within basic science** must have between four and eight years of research experience since completing their PhD degree (calculated at the application deadline), i.e., be at the career stage of senior postdoc, assistant professor, or a recently appointed associate professor/senior researcher. Any leave of absence due to parental/sick/care leave may be deducted from the PhD seniority if start and end dates are indicated in the proposal and CV.
- **Applicants within clinical science** must be MDs, must have obtained a PhD degree or equivalent academic qualifications within the last six years (calculated at the application deadline), and must be able to commit 20-50% of their time to research. The research commitment may vary over the course of the grant period for applicants under their medical specialist training but should always be sufficient to be a present and active group leader/supervisor and cannot be less than 20% on average. Any leave of absence due to parental/sick/care leave may be deducted from the PhD seniority if start and end dates are indicated in the proposal and CV.

Applicants who are not affiliated with a Danish research institution at the time of submitting their proposal must have a clear agreement with a Danish research institution which is committed to hosting the grantee and research activities throughout the grant period (see the Appendices section concerning support letter). It is expected that grantees have established their group at the receiving institution within one year of obtaining a grant offer.

A LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowship is a defining, individual grant at the disposal of the Fellow. Collaborations are encouraged; however, the applicant must be the clear driver of the research activities, and the merits of collaborators will not be included in the evaluation of the proposal.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- Applicants may not already hold or, within the same year that the LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowship is awarded, accept a Danish or international starting grant (e.g., ERC Starting Grant, Sapere Aude Research Leader Grant, Novo Nordisk Foundation Hallas-Møller Investigator Grant or Clinical Investigator Grant, Lundbeck Foundation Fellows, Carlsberg Foundation Semper Ardens grant, or similar). If an applicant has submitted or is in the process of preparing a proposal for another starting grant call, this should be mentioned in the application to the LEO Foundation.
- Applicants may submit only one application for the present call.
- An application can only have one main applicant and one host organization to which all funding will be paid out. If an application involves collaboration(s) which require redistribution of funds, such redistribution and related reporting is the responsibility of the main applicant and host institution.
- A LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowship grantee cannot apply for other research grants from the LEO Foundation until the last year of the grant period of the Fellowship grant, and any new grant awarded by the Foundation cannot be initiated until the Fellowship grant has ended.

**Application and evaluation process**

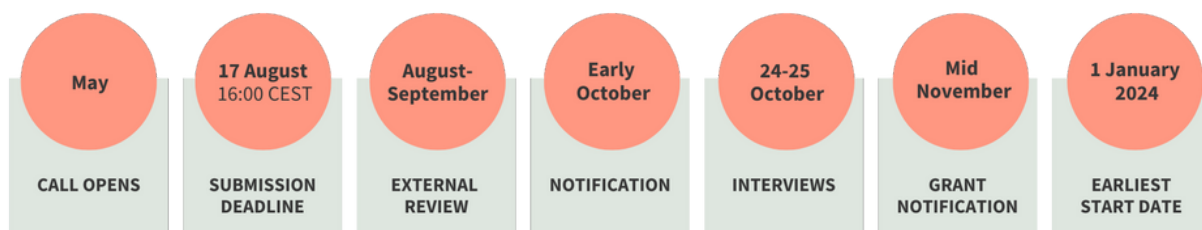
The evaluation process is carried out in two steps:

**Step 1:** Two ad hoc review committees with expertise within the two themes of the call will review the submitted applications.

**Step 2:** Top-ranked applicants are invited for an interview with the LEO Foundation Grant Committee:

- **24 October 2023:** Interview with top-ranked applicants for the theme Skin Immunology and Inflammatory Skin Diseases
- **25 October 2023:** Interview with top-ranked applicants for the theme Skin Physiology and Cutaneous Drug Delivery

Based on the application and the interview with the applicant, the Committee makes a recommendation to the LEO Foundation Board of Trustees concerning which applicants to award a LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowship.





## Evaluation criteria

The proposed research and the applicant are weighted equally in the evaluation.

The proposed research is evaluated based on quality, novelty, potential impact on skin health, and feasibility.

The applicant is evaluated based on scientific merits relative to PhD age and career stage, creativity, potential as research leader, and level of independence.

## Application content

The application, including appendices, must be written in English. The research proposal is presented in the following sections:

- **Layman's summary** (maximum 2,000 characters including spaces): Please provide a summary which is suitable for the Foundation's communication to the public in case a grant is awarded. Structure it according to the following headers: Vision; Plans; Impact.  
NB: Do not include sensitive or confidential information.
- **Purpose and state-of-the-art** (maximum 5,000 characters including spaces): Please describe the vision and the key aims of your research activities, provide information on current state-of-the-art and other relevant background information, describe your hypotheses, the novelty of your proposal, etc.
- **Research activities** (maximum 15,000 characters including spaces): Please describe your research approach and main activities, including methodologies, overall prioritization of resources, plan for collaborations and inclusion of external areas of expertise, implementation, mitigation plans for key risks, etc.
- **Significance and impact** (maximum 3,000 characters including spaces): Please describe the relevance and potential short- and long-term impact of your research activities, including their contribution to current state-of-the-art in the research field and to skin health or treatment of skin diseases.
- **Research leadership and environment** (maximum 3,000 characters including spaces): Please describe your vision for your research leadership and the community that you will be part of, e.g., your role as a group leader; the local research environment and your integration into it, including teaching activities, synergies, and relevant infrastructure facilities and support; your current and potential future competitive edge as a research leader on an international scale; collaborations (established and potential).
- **Literature references** (maximum 8,000 characters including spaces): Please provide reference information for all the literature used in your proposal, preferably with direct links to a relevant database, e.g., PubMed.
- **Peer review** (maximum 1,000 characters including spaces): Applications for the LEO Foundation Dr Abildgaard Fellowships will be reviewed by an external committee of expert scientists. If you believe that a specific researcher should NOT be invited to review your application, please provide name, affiliation, and brief argumentation here.

## Funding

Grants of DKK 12 million are awarded for a five-year period. The Foundation will award up to four grants in 2023, two within each theme.

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses:

- Salary for main applicant (for applicants within clinical science, corresponding to the time commitment to research)
- Salary for others (scientific and technical employees)
- Running costs, incl. tuition fee for PhD students (maximum DKK 80,000 per year) and bench fees (if mandatory for the involved laboratory facilities)
- Equipment
- Travel, incl. conference participation
- Publication costs
- Relocation costs (up to DKK 100,000; costs must be reasonable and compliant with national and local guidelines for Danish public research institutions)
- Administrative costs of up to 5% of the total budget

## Appendices to the application

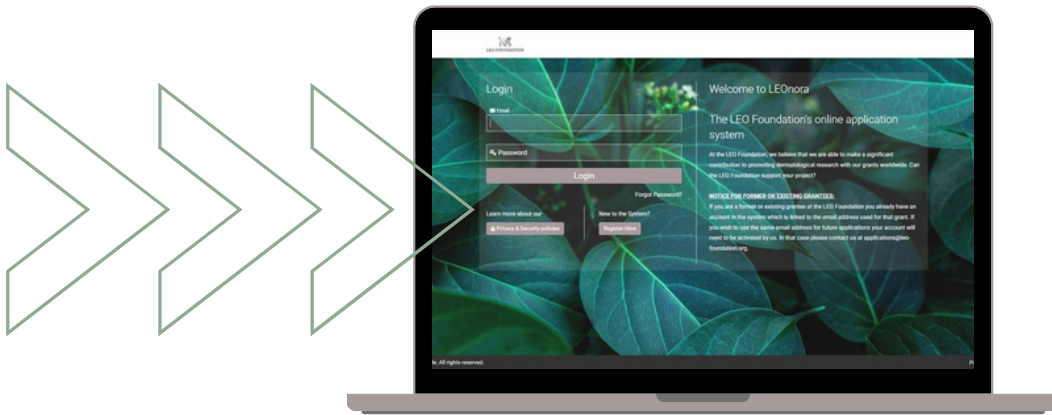
Applicants must include the following four appendices in PDF:

- Letter of support (maximum one page): Applicants must submit a signed letter of support from the department head of the administrating institution demonstrating its support and recognition of the applicant and committing to hosting the applicant's group and administering the grant. It is encouraged to emphasize synergies between the applicant's proposed research and the research at the receiving department in the support letter.
- CV (maximum five pages): Applicants should include in the following order: academic employment, education, and periods of leave with start and end dates, academic awards and honors, overview of current grants, expected time commitment to the Fellowship (only for applicants within clinical science), scientific focus areas, contributions to science, project management experience, international collaborations, teaching, supervision and mentoring experience, and a short bibliographical overview summarizing total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first and last/corresponding authorships, number of citations, and h-index.
- Publication list (maximum one page): Applicants must list the 10 most relevant articles for evaluating their merits for the present proposal and include a link to an updated profile with their full publication list on either Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, or similar.
- Letter of intent (maximum one page): Applicants must submit a letter of intent from a colleague at the Danish host institution, who commits to mentoring the applicant during the grant period on topics such as leadership, supervision, project management, establishing oneself as a faculty member, etc.
- The appendices are uploaded in the Appendices section of the Research Details tab.



## How to submit an application

Applications must be submitted through our application and grant management portal, LEO Nora: [www.leo-foundation.smartsimple.ie/s\\_Login.jsp](http://www.leo-foundation.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp)



### **User registration**

If you access the system for the first time you will need to create a user account. Upon initial registration you will receive an email with an activation link which must be activated within two hours to confirm your account. In case you exceed this limit, you may request a new from the “Forgot password” link. If you are a returning user, simply log in with your existing credentials. Remember that your password will need renewal every 90 days.

### **Completing your profile**

Once logged in you will need to complete all mandatory fields of your user account profile before you can create applications for any open calls. In addition to the mandatory fields, we recommend that you add your academic or business title under “Job title”. Your profile can be accessed by clicking the circle with your Initials in the top right corner of the dashboard.

### **Creating an application**

First, you will need to identify the correct call. Current calls (recently closed, active and coming) can be found in the list at the bottom of your dashboard when logged in but only the active can be accessed. Some of these calls may include a very short eligibility quiz. You create a draft application for an active call by pressing “Apply Now” for that call. Once created, you can edit the application and save changes at any time until the submission deadline for the related call.

NOTE: Remember to press “Save draft” to save any changes.

### **Structure of the application form**

The application form consists of several sub-sections (tabs) which are explained in detail below. For most fields there are guidance and/or tooltips available within the system. If you experience any problems, feel free to contact the LEO Foundation at [applications@leo-foundation.org](mailto:applications@leo-foundation.org).

Please note that the text fields only accept plain text formatting so any rich text formatting which is copied in will be lost.

#### **1. Applicant Details**

This tab is partly auto populated from the user account profile. Optionally, you can indicate your nationality. Please indicate the proposed Danish hosting institution for the grant period if you are not currently employed there.

#### **2. Research Information**

This tab includes information on project title, proposed start and end dates of the grant period and categorization of the project.

- Project title: A short, concise title for the proposed work.
- Proposed start and end dates
- Project type: This is the overall type of project. Please select the most appropriate category:
  - o Basic research
  - o Translational research
  - o Clinical research
  - o Epidemiological research
  - o Technology development
  - o Other (save and specify in text box)

#### **3. Research details**

In this tab you present your research proposal. Please note the instructions in the 'APPLICATION CONTENT' section of the Application Guide.

##### **3.a. Appendices**

Please upload all mandatory documents as PDF files (.pdf). See section on "APPENDICES TO THE APPLICATION" above for details.

In addition to the mandatory documents, you can upload up to four (4) figures in support of the application either through the regular upload field as PDFs or through the Image Upload Field (.jpg or .png format only). Please ensure sufficiently high resolution for proper evaluation. Please add figure number and legend or caption to each figure.

#### **4. Requested budget**

Detailed Budget: Please provide a budget in DKK for the full five-year grant period, specifying budget year, type, requested amount, and funding source. You also have the option to include a brief, high-level description of the individual budget posts.

Press “Save Draft” before closing the pop-up form to ensure that the main budget page is updated. Only include direct costs in the detailed budget, as any selected percentage of administrative costs will be added automatically if chosen in the ‘Additional Information’ section in the main budget page, cf. below.

The requested funding from the LEO Foundation must amount to exactly DKK 12,000,000 in total, including any administrative costs. In the table below, you can see the available amount of funding for direct costs if a percentage of administrative costs is selected in ‘Additional Information’:

<b>Administrative costs</b>	<b>Direct project costs (DKK) applied for at the LEO Foundation</b>
0%	12,000,000
1%	11,881,188
2%	11,764,706
3%	11,650,485
4%	11,538,462
5%	11,428,571

Note on salaries: The Foundation will not support salary posts that are already covered by existing base salary or any other funding. If salary is requested for the main applicant or others at the level of Assistant Professor or above, this must be accompanied by an explanation as to why this is necessary in the “Salary for existing full-time employee(s) justification” field.

**Additional information:**

Here, you must specify if you would like to request administrative costs as part of the budget (up to 5% of the total budget). Press “Save draft” again after specifying a percentage to update the budget calculations.

Please also add information on the total number of people to receive salary from the LEO Foundation during the project and add an estimate of the average annual full-time equivalents (FTE) for the project – e.g., if a postdoc works 100% and a technician works 50% on the project, you should add 1.5 in this field.

**5. Host approval and grant terms**

Here, you acknowledge that your host organization approves that the project can be performed there and that you have read and understood the current Grant Terms.

**Submitting the application**

Once you have completed your application, you can submit it by pressing “Submit”. It is your responsibility to check the generated application PDF before submitting to ensure that all sections are readable and that all mandatory elements are included.

If any mandatory elements are missing, you will not be able to submit, and you will be presented with a list of missing elements. Correcting the missing elements may take time, so we recommend that you initiate and complete your application well in advance of the application deadline.

You will be notified by email if there are changes requested to your application or any decision has been made.

**The LEO Foundation** is one of the largest private funders globally of independent skin research. The Foundation provides philanthropic grants with the aim to support the best international research in skin diseases and make Denmark a global beacon for skin research.

Over the past decade, the LEO Foundation has supported independent skin research with more than EUR 130 million.

[www.leo-foundation.org](http://www.leo-foundation.org)



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