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**YUFE4Postdocs Call**

*Are you an early career postdoctoral researcher wanting to create impact with your research?*

*Would you like to learn more about how to interact with potential stakeholders of your research and further develop your skills in Open Science and Open Innovation?*

*Then you should definitely apply for a three-year YUFE4 postdoc position at one of the YUFE universities!*

YUFE is the alliance of ten dynamic, young, student-centred and research-based universities and two non-academic partners from the non-governmental and private sector. They are collaborating to create an impactful European University.

With the support of a Marie Skłodowska-Curie program (MSCA) COFUND grant, the second (and final) call is launched under YUFE4Postdocs, for **22 postdoc positions** with a duration of 36 months in nine YUFE universities. The indicative starting date for appointment is 1st of September 2024.

**For whom?**

The call is open for **early career postdoctoral researchers** from around the world and from **all disciplines** as long as their proposal addresses **one or more societal challenges or opportunities**, framed in an **urban context.** Candidates further define their research training project within one of the two YUFE focus areas open in this call: **Citizens’ Well-Being** and **European Identity. Thus, we are looking for postdocs who are interested in doing their research while being trained within this framework.**

Postdoctoral positions are open in the following YUFE universities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YUFE university | Number of positions in this call |
| University of Antwerp  | 3 |
| University of Eastern Finland | 4 |
| University of Bremen | 2 |
| University of Cyprus | 3 |
| Maastricht University\* | 4 |
| Universidad Carlos III de Madrid | 3 |
| University of Rijeka | 3 |
| Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun | 2 |
| University of Essex\* | 2 |

\* *In Call 2 Maastricht University has a total of 4 positions available in the following faculties: 1 position at the School of Business and Economics (SBE) and 3 positions at the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML).*

The YUFE universities welcome candidates for positions within the entire university.  However, in Maastricht University call 2 positions are offered only by the School of Economics & Business and the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences.

**Overall objective of the YUFE4Postdocs program and its calls**

Guided by our vision to create a true European University with an integrated R&I agenda, the YUFE4Postdocs call holds a twofold objective. Firstly, it supports and grows research talent and professional career development. Secondly, it will initiate or deepen research collaboration between host universities and beyond.

Firmly embedded within their local urban ecosystems, the YUFE universities want to deliver impact within and beyond their urban communities. This defines the characteristics of this call:

* With YUFE4Postdocs we invite candidates **in all disciplines** to apply. They can freely choose a research topic.
* PLEASE NOTE: the chosen research training project must address **one or more societal challenges or opportunities.** These must be framed in an **urban context**. Only proposals explicitly addressing the overarching core theme of urban challenges and opportunities will be considered as eligible.
* Furthermore, as future-proof researchers responsive to societal needs, the selected YUFE postdocs will carry out their research in dialogue with (one or more) external stakeholder representatives with an interest in their research. More stakeholder representatives can be involved if this is in the interest of the project.
* As part of their application, candidates must have identified a **supervisor** at a YUFE host university, and a **co-supervisor** at a YUFE co-host university. YUFE postdocs will be guided and supported by these two academic supervisors and by an additional non-academic mentor. The latter is identified after the start of the project.
* Candidates define their own research project, although this must match within the research groups or department of their prospective supervisors in host and co-host university. While being mentored, postdocs will enjoy a high level of autonomy to pursue their research project and develop their future career plan. Supervision of YUFE postdocs is open for tenured and tenure track academic staff from YUFE universities with at least a 10% appointment.
* A supervisor can be involved in maximum two applications for this call. A co-supervisor can be involved in maximum two applications for this call in the cohost-university. But an academic can only supervise one postdoc at the host university and one other postdoc (as co-supervisor) at a co-host university selected under this call.

Applications must contain a signed letter of support from both the supervisor and co-supervisor.

We advise that candidates first identify and secure a supervisor at a YUFE host university, before approaching potential co-supervisors in the other YUFE universities. They must start approaching potential (co)supervisors well in time, as securing these letters can take longer than anticipated. Failure to submit the letters of support will lead to an application being regarded as non-eligible and it will not pass to the next stage of the selection procedure.

**All YUFE universities, including Maastricht University, welcome candidates to approach co-supervisors in all their faculties, departments, centers or research groups.**

For assistance in finding a supervisor or co-supervisor in the YUFE universities, candidates can consult the Inventory available on the YUFE4Postdocs website: <https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/> or consult the local contact person, called the Navigator. Contact details of Navigators are also available on the website.

**Eligible candidates**

* Candidates should have a PhD degree at the call deadline on 20th  December 2023. Applicants who have submitted their thesis and have been allowed to defend before 20th April 2024 can also apply.
* The call targets early career postdoctoral researchers. They must have obtained their (first) PhD a maximum of 6 years before 20th December 2023. Years of experience outside research and career breaks (e.g., due to parental and other care or medical related leaves) will not count. More information on the conditions can be found in the Guide for Applicants, which is available on the Y4P website.
* Candidates must comply with the MSCA mobility rule: they must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the prospective host university for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before 20th December 2023.

The MSCA mobility rule is not applicable to the co-host university. This means that candidates can choose a co-supervisor in a YUFE co-host university in the country they are currently residing or working in.

1. **Objectives of the Research Training projects**

**Urban challenges and opportunities**

With the broad character of the research called for, **applications in all disciplines** are welcomed.

Candidates identify **one or more societal challenges** framed in an **urban context** in their project. The urban context refers to people, communities, environments, organisations, structures and processes identifiable within cities and their surroundings. They are to define societal impact on a short, mid or longer term with relevance for one or more **“stakeholders groups” and/or “stakeholder representative organisations”** in an urban context.

* Stakeholder groups refer to groups of people or entities (e.g., students, people with disabilities, small businesses, museums, city councils…)
* Stakeholder representative organisations refer generically to organisations representing or serving members or individual actors (e.g., business or sector federations, civil society organizations, patient organisations, hospitals…). Specific organisations may be identified in the applications, although this is not required.

An interdisciplinary approach in the research project is not required. However, when considered relevant, it will be positively assessed in the evaluation process.

Project applications should have an interest beyond the agenda and interests of a single stakeholder organisation. Therefore, research projects that are tailored one-on-one to the agenda or interests of an individual organisation (public or private) without generic relevance for similar stakeholder organisations, are not compatible with this call.

**Focus areas**

* Where the subject of research touches upon health (physical, mental, environmental, public health, etc.) or other aspects of well-being of citizens in various capacities (residents, patients, students, caregivers, parents, or other stakeholders) the application can be directed to the focus area “Citizen’s Well-Being”. The subject should be explicitly framed in an urban context, which could consider, for example, health burdens, populations, environments, inequalities, care systems, planning and policy, etc.
* Where the subject of research touches on European identity/ies in an urban context, the application should be directed to the focus area “European identity”. The subject can consider inter-relationships between European identity/ies and urban policies, structures, processes, communities or stakeholders, as well as elements of such identities in an urban context, such as culture, heritage, politics, values, …. Research taking a critical perspective exploring the potential threats, challenges and risks of a concept like European identity (e.g. social and economic exclusivity, governance approaches, etc.) also fits in the scope of this focus area.

For both focus domains, applications are invited for both technological and non-technological research.

There is no pre-allocation of postdoc positions to the focus areas.

1. **Selection of candidates**

The selection process comprises an initial eligibility check.

* Note: only proposals explicitly addressing the overarching core theme of urban challenges and opportunities will be considered as eligible.
* Note: only proposals using the template forms provided will be considered as eligible.

The eligibility check is followed by a peer review process, with three independent experts assessing every application. The assessment reports will feed into the interdisciplinary Selection Committees, one for each focus domain, that give a final score and will rank the applications. Selected candidates are nominated for appointment in the respective host universities according to the ranking list.

1. **Program offer and conditions**

A successful candidate:

* will be employed full-time as a postdoctoral researcher at the YUFE host university for a duration of three years.
* will engage in either starting or deepening an existing collaboration with researchers from (at least one) other YUFE university (co-host university). A minimum of one month and maximum of 6 months secondment in the co-host university is part of the program, either a long stay or several shorter stays. For these intra-YUFE secondments we offer an intra-YUFE mobility allowance for living expenses and a yearly travel allowance.
* will be supervised by two supervising faculty members: one at the host- and one at the co-host university. Both have to state their engagement via signed letters as part of the submitted application. Additionally, a non-academic mentor will be involved after the appointment of the postdoc.
* will be part of a community of YUFE postdocs appointed and takes part in the YUFE4Postdoc training program featuring two interactive seminars paid for by the program (Pillar 1), a number of joint transferable skills trainings (Pillar 2), and (optionally) complementary courses in their host university (Pillar 3).
* will develop, with the assistance of the supervisors and non-academic mentor, a Career development plan within the first three months of their appointment. This will indicate major expected research accomplishments, participation in communication and dissemination activities and short- and longer-term career objectives. This Career development plan will be updated throughout their research training project in YUFE4Postdocs.
* is invited to present their research and research training trajectory at the end of their appointment at an annual YUFE event.

The host universities offer:

* an attractive remuneration composed of a salary and an additional mobility allowance (200 EUR/month). The minimum gross salary is indicated in the Guide for Applicants;
* a specific allowance in support of the intra-YUFE mobility and travel managed for the postdoc by the host university;
* a research allowance for the project of the YUFE postdoc managed by the host university;
* access to YUFE4Postdocs comprehensive training program (supra);
* committed and well trained academic supervisors;
* a gateway for contacts with non-academic stakeholders, including the organisations that are involved as Associated Partners to the YUFE4Postdocs program.

In line with the MSCA regulations, in case of recruited researchers with disabilities whose long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments are such that their participation in YUFE4postdocs would not be possible without extra financial support, a special needs allowance can be requested. The host university will use this allowance to ensure necessary staff assistance or for adapting the work environment.

**How to apply**

Applications should be submitted via the YUFE4Postdocs application portal, which will be open on 1st October 2023. It is accessible through the YUFE4Postdocs website.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to find a supervisor and a co-supervisor. We recommend to start this process as early as possible. The YUFE navigators are available to assist but the responsibility to establish contact lies with the applicant.

Applicants will be asked to complete key contact details including those of the host-supervisor and the co-host-supervisor.

Applicants will be asked to complete project information on the application portal and to upload the following documents in English using the templates provided:

* Structured CV
* PhD diploma or provisional PhD certificate on headed paper from their supervisor/academic institution confirming that the thesis has been submitted and will be defended before 20th April 2024
* Research Training Project (max. 8 pages excluding bibliographic references and an image/figure)
* Commitment letters by the supervisors at host university and co-host university
* Ethics self-assessment form

Applicants can submit one application for this call.

The closing date for applications is **12:00 midnight (CET) on Wednesday 20th December 2023.**

**More information**

Interested candidates should consult the following information:

* This call document
* The Guide for Applicants
* Specific information on the host universities indicated in the Guide for Applicants. They can further contact the local Navigator in the prospective host university for information or for assistance toward finding a supervisor, or co-supervisor. Contact details of Navigators are available on the Y4P website.

Further assistance is available:

The YUFE4PostdocsHelpdesk can be consulted for both general questions about the program and specific questions related to a prospective host university. The email address is: yufe4postdocs@uantwerpen.be

A live webinar will be organised in mid- October with time for Q&A. Candidates will be required to register. More information will soon be available on the YUFE4Postdocs website.