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**GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS**

**Postdoctoral research positions**

**Call 2 for applications**

**2023**

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**Co-funded by the European Union**

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The aim of this guide is to provide potential applicants with practical information on how to apply, and a description of the assessment procedure. It should be read in combination with the YUFE4Postdocs call text.

If you require further information about the YUFE4Postdocs program, please consult the contact information in section 6 of this guide.

**Update of the Guide for Applicants**

This Guide for Applicants was updated on 27th October 2023 with respect to:

* Eligibility of supervisors (page 11 and page 20)
* Number of positions available at Maastricht University (page 11)

This Guide for Applicants was updated on 9th November 2023 with respect to:

* Co-funding commitment of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (page 11)

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## **Introduction and Overview**

The YUFE universities are pleased to announce their second call for postdoctoral research positions within their YUFE4Postdocs (Y4P) program. Under the overarching theme ‘Urban challenges and opportunities’ a total of 51 researcher positions (for the two calls) are offered across nine universities over a five-year period. These positions are available for incoming postdocs only (mobility requirement). YUFE4Postdocs is an **open program: it invites applications from candidates in all disciplines**. The target audience are researchers that have obtained their PhD a maximum of 6 years before the application deadline.

The second call will be open from **1st October 2023** to **20th December 2023** and addresses applications within the focus areas of **Citizens’ Well-Being** and **European Identity**.

The program is co-funded by Horizon Europe’s Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) scheme. The MSCA COFUND scheme provides funding for regional, national and international programs for training and career development. It promotes sustainable training and international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility and spreads best practices by promoting high standards and excellent working conditions. Postdocs will be appointed at one of YUFE’s partner universities and will form part of a community of postdoc researchers within the YUFE alliance, wherein they will be recognizable, valued and trained. All of the host universities offer them attractive employment conditions and allowances to provide for training and research needs.

### YUFE Alliance

Founded on the joint vision, the YUFE Alliance is embarking upon the creation of a young, student-centered, non-elitist and inclusive European University based on cooperation between higher education, public and private sector and citizens.

The YUFE universities are united by a common profile, shared beliefs and interests and a commitment to working together to create innovative solutions. They aim to increase employability, foster inclusive higher education and invest in the active learning of European languages.

Their central characteristics include:

1. All are young universities.
2. All are research-intensive.
3. All are student-centred and non-elitist.
4. All have close ties to local and regional governments and businesses and are part of triple (academia, industry and government) or quadruple (academia, industry, government and civil society/public) helixes.
5. All see their future in Europe.
6. All are committed to the career development of their staff.

### 1.2 YUFE partner universities

The nine YUFE Alliance partner universities involved in this project are listed below. All have received the European Commission’s ‘HR Excellence in Research’ award and have endorsed the ‘European Charter for Researchers’ and the ‘Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers’.

***Table 1- Description of partner universities***

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **University** | **Country** | **Description** |
| [University of Antwerp](https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/) | Belgium | UAntwerpen is a dynamic and forward-thinking university. The university ranks 131in the ‘Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2023’. In the Young University Rankings, the university ranks 7th in the ‘[Times Higher Education Young](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.timeshighereducation.com%2Fstudent%2Fbest-universities%2Fbest-young-universities-millennials&data=05%7C01%7CHannah.WhittleLetchford%40uantwerpen.be%7Cd62ab799cfb94317edc708dba545bb11%7C792e08fb2d544a8eaf72202548136ef6%7C0%7C0%7C638285491125448988%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=47%2B68z1w%2FrxCw9NXrOjUb2TmFqMdUBEZzam%2BoHs4MMU%3D&reserved=0) University Ranking’ and 20th in the ‘QS Top 50 Under 50 2021’. UAntwerpen has ca. 2171 PhD students, 706 tenured professors, over 336 assistants and over 3734 tenured staff members. It produces over 3650 peer-reviewed scientific publications and 280 PhDs per year. Research in the university is carried out in a total of 113 research groups in 9 Faculties and two Institutes. A substantial number of research groups cluster in 15 Centres of Excellence and in 8 Technology Consortia. Interdisciplinary research collaboration with high societal relevance is also fostered in the Urban Studies Institute and the Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development. Embedded in its local ecosystem with the City of Antwerp and Port of Antwerp, the business network Voka and other public and private partners, its innovation strategy focuses on three valorisation areas: sustainable chemistry & materials; metropolitanism, smart city, mobility & logistics; infectious diseases & environmental health. Within each domain, a co-creation innovation hub brings together industry and academia bridging research and innovation. |
| [University of Eastern Finland](https://www.uef.fi/en) | Finland | University of Eastern Finland (UEF) is one of the largest universities in Finland and ranked among the world top 500 universities (QS, ARWU, THE). UEF offers teaching in more than 100 major subjects and in 13 fields of study for 16 000 degree-students. Research is done by 1 800 academic staff members (280 Professors, 200 postdoc researchers) with 34 million euros competitive research funding, producing annually 3500 scientific publications and 170 doctoral degrees. UEF’s Strategy 2030 -seizing a sustainable future is rooted in global challenges seeking solutions in profile areas through interdisciplinary research. The profiles areas are 1) Ageing, lifestyles and health, 2) Cultural encounters, mobilities and borders, 3) Diversifying learning and interaction, and 4) Environmental change and sustainable use of natural resources. In its selected strategic fields UEF is ranked among the world’s leading 50-300 universities (QS, THE, ARWU discipline rankings). Campuses in Kuopio and Joensuu are in close vicinity to several research institutes the European Forest Institute, Kuopio University Hospital, technology parks and knowledge-based enterprises.  |
| [University of Bremen](https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/) | Germany | University of Bremen (U Bremen) is a mid-sized university with 320 professors (including 50 professorships in collaboration with extra-university research institutes, e.g., Max-Planck or Helmholtz institutes) and 20.000 students, offering a full spectrum of academic disciplines. Founded as a reform university in 1971, it is now among the top 50 European young research universities. Interdisciplinarity, social responsibility and the promotion of talent are at the core of the university’s mission and strategy. The promotion and independence of early career researchers is a core element of U Bremen ́s research strategy. The university has developed academic career paths leading to tenured positions as senior lecturer and senior researcher that are novel to the German academic landscape. Moreover, it has recently developed and established a hiring and evaluation scheme for tenure-track professorships. U Bremen ́s innovation strategy builds on the development of collaborative research in high-profile areas. Currently, 5 areas are successfully established (Marine, Polar and Climate Research, Social Change, Social Policy and the State; Materials Sciences and Technologies; Minds, Media, Machines; Health Sciences). These are closely connected with the federal state of Bremen ́s smart specialization strategy including IT and Environmental Technologies, Materials Sciences, and Automation and Robotics. |
| [University of Cyprus](https://www.ucy.ac.cy/?lang=en%2F) | Cyprus | University of Cyprus (UCY) ranks 84th in the Top 200 World Universities under 50 years old Category of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021. It is a dynamic institution, evidenced by its continuously elevated rankings placed 601-700 in Shanghai List 2020 and 501-600 in the Times Higher Education Rankings 2021. UCY comprises 8 Faculties, 22 Departments, 14 Research Units and 45 PhD programs (including two joint PhD programs with universities from abroad). It currently has over 500 PhD students and over 700 PhD graduates. UCY is also the coordinator of the EC funded YUFERING project that is to bring the YUFE alliance closer to create and realize a shared R&I vision. Currently, UCY implements 28 Marie Sklodowska-Curie Action (MSCA) projects: Postdoc Fellowships, Doctoral Networks, Staff Exchanges and a COFUND Action. UCY has so far implemented 72 MSCA projects. UCY is the biggest employer in Cyprus for young graduates and researchers. UCY seeks to attract new qualified scientists and researchers because our constant aim is to be the largest employers' organization for young researchers in Cyprus. |
| [Maastricht University](https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/) | Netherlands | Maastricht University (UM) is a European network university with a global outlook and a solid base in the Euregion (border regions of Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands). UM’s strategy for 2022-2026 aims to further enhance the quality and scope of internationalisation of education and research. It strives to become a ‘living lab’ and expertise center for Europe. Some facts and figures: 20.000 students, 300 PhD students, 2.300 academic staff, 510 tenured Professors. UM is coordinating founder of the YUFE Alliance. It takes the 127th position in THE World University Ranking, 6th Universities worldwide under 50 years. Within its four interdisciplinary campuses, problem-based learning is by excellence the method to bridge different perspectives, preparing students for their career. Internationalization encompasses different levels of engagement, from regional to global. Some examples of its European focus are ITEM (Institute for Transnational and EU regional cross-border cooperation and Mobility), ‘Maastricht, Working on Europe’ (a joint initiative of the City of Maastricht, the Province of Limburg and Maastricht University) and YUFE. The Province of Limburg executive program ‘Innovative Connecting’ joins forces of public and private organizations regionally and crossing borders. Various initiatives are financed by EU Cohesion funds. |
| [Universidad Carlos III De Madrid](https://www.uc3m.es/Home) | Spain | Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) is a public university established in 1989, and is known for being young, innovative and research-intensive. Founded on a quality-oriented philosophy, flexible and multidisciplinary curricula have been designed aiming to meet scientific and technological challenges of society. UC3M is home to 23.000 students, more than 20% international, and 1327 are doctoral candidates, almost 50% international. UC3M demonstrated a continuous effort for internationalizing its research activity, fostering its participation in the European Research Area, and its commitment to society. The University research is carried out under the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and its strategic plan (2016-2022) focuses on three main values: Open, Digital and Global. As part of its commitment to internationalization and global research and education, the UC3M has established strong alliances with academic institutions all over the world, mainly in Europe (e.g., YERUN, EUA and UNICA). |
| [University of Rijeka](https://uniri.hr/en/home/) | Croatia | University of Rijeka is a research-oriented university providing higher education, awarding doctoral degrees and supporting social and economic development in the wider region, with a total of 15 faculties, 1 academy, 13 specialized R&D centers and over 160 study programs. UNIRI has over 1970 employees, 1200 researchers and is the educational home for more than 16000 students. Its development strategy focuses on educational and scientific excellence, active collaboration with the local community, and active inclusion into the EHEA & ERA. In 2019 UNIRI signed a Declaration on European Open Science thereby emphasizing the importance of all researchers in the EU having access to an open-by-default, efficient, and cross-disciplinary research data environment based on efficient usage methodology and supported by FAIR Data Principles. In 2021 the Open Science Policy of the University of Rijeka was adopted, and the University signed The Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). UNIRI has been included in QS World University Rankings and in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022. |
| [Nicolaus Copernicus](https://www.umk.pl/en/) University  | Poland | Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (NCU) is one of the largest universities in Poland, comprising 16 faculties, including 3 medical faculties at Collegium Medicum UMK in Bydgoszcz. It provides graduate and postgraduate courses for 17802 students, offering education in over 100 fields of study and 43 postgraduate courses. The university employs 4450 staff on its Toruń and Bydgoszcz campuses, over half of whom are academic teachers. NCU alumni now number around 200 000. NCU is one of the most dynamically developing university in Poland. NCU aims to consolidate as a stimulating working environment for researchers, and aligns its strategic goals with the transnational initiative of the EC to enhance the quality of R&I. In line with its strategy of societal outreach, NCU opened the Centre for Academic Entrepreneurship and Technology Transfer on the 1st of January 2021, aspiring to generate additional impact of NCU research on local communities and businesses. |
| [University of Essex](https://www.essex.ac.uk/) | United Kingdom | University of Essex (UEssex) is a medium size university with approximately 18.000 students and 1.000 academic staff from more than 140 countries. It was named University of The Year in the UK by the Times Higher Education (THE) in 2018. Ranked in the top 20 UK universities for research excellence (REF 2014) and gold-rated for its educational provision (TEF 2017), as well as 300-350 in THE WUR 2022, and 25th for international outlook in THE WUR 2022. UEssex is committed to excellence in research and education, with specific focus on interdisciplinarity. It is home to globally significant interdisciplinary centers including the Institute for Analytics and Data Science, the Human Rights Centre, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Center for Migration Studies, the new Institute for Public Health and Wellbeing. UEssex has declared a climate and ecological emergency with key work on sustainability cutting across disciplines, departments, and faculties. Its strong links with local authorities (county and city) focus on climate actions, public health, and local entrepreneurship. The university is ranked in the top 5 in the UK for social science research (REF 2014); the Department of Government is ranked 1stin the UK since 1986. The 2021 QS World University Rankings by Subject show the University of Essex in the global top 50 for ‘Politics and International Studies’ and ‘Sociology’.  |

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## 2. YUFE4Postdocs program

The YUFE4Postdocs program is launched as part of the Research and Innovation agenda of the YUFE alliance.

**With YUFE4Postdocs, the YUFE partners pursue the following objectives:**

* To attract talented early career postdoc researchers by providing excellent research conditions, dedicated mentoring and a novel training program;
* To foster research excellence with a societal impact;
* To create an interdisciplinary community of postdoc researchers among the YUFE partner universities, with the YUFE postdocs as co-creators of a European research university;
* To improve career development opportunities of the YUFE postdocs researchers, and other postdoc talent in the alliance and beyond;
* To create an international reference program for advanced postdoc research training.

**YUFE4Postdocs comprises the following elements:**

**An overarching theme**: Applications can be in a broad range of disciplines and can cater for interdisciplinary approaches. **However, they must address a research subject connected to *‘Urban opportunities and challenges’*** and define it within one of YUFE’s focus areas: *Sustainability; Digital Societies* (in the first call)*; Citizens’ well-being; and European identity* (in the second call). Candidates can define their own research subject within the overarching narrative, for a project that they will carry out within the research environment of their host university under guidance of a local supervisor, and with support of a co-supervisor in another YUFE university.

**A novel selection process**, combining a sound disciplinary assessment with an evaluation of the project’s added value to societal stakeholders. Its selection process upholds a novel approach by assessing applicants on a broader and qualitative set of selection criteria and involves non-academic stakeholders.

**A comprehensive three-pillar training programme** focused on ‘Community engagement'. As important components of community engagement, interaction with stakeholders, Open Science (OS), Open Innovation and interdisciplinarity run as a red thread through the program.

The benefits for postdoc researchers include:

**YUFE4Postdocs benefits**

* **Attractive employment conditions:** appointments with a 36- months perspective, competitive remuneration including a mobility allowance for private mobility-related costs, an intra-YUFE mobility allowance, a travel allowance and a research bench fee.
* **A three-pillar training program**, on community engagement, stakeholder interaction, Open Science and Open Innovation
* **Personalised supervision and career guidance**: each postdoc is supported by two supervisors (at the host and co-host university) and a non-academic mentor, ensuring an adequate balance between personal mentoring and safeguarding the postdoc’s individual responsibilities and initiative. The postdocs steer their Career Development Plan (CDP) as an individual roadmap.
* **Implementation by an EU-wide, experienced and complementary consortium**, under the coordination of University of Antwerp. In addition to the nine partner universities, a total of 16 cities, regions and business organisations stated their commitment to support Y4P as Associated Partners by participating in the selection process and the training program, and/or by acting as gateway to entities (stakeholders) within their network.

### 2.1 Thematic umbrella for the research projects: Urban challenges and opportunities,

###  within YUFE’s focus area

Considering the broad character of the research called for, candidates and projects from **all disciplines are welcome**. An interdisciplinary approach in the research project is not required. However, when considered relevant, it will be positively assessed in the evaluation process.

Candidates can freely choose a research topic, but in their proposed research project they must define **one or more societal challenges**, framed in an **urban context**. The urban context refers to people, communities, environments, organisations, structures and/or processes identifiable within cities and surrounding areas. **Applicants must explicitly address a research subject connected to *‘Urban opportunities and challenges’.***

As such they are expected to define societal impact on a short, mid- or longer term with relevance for one or more **“stakeholder groups” and/or “stakeholder representative organisations”**.

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

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

In this second call applicants define their research project within one of the two YUFE focus areas: **Citizens’ Well-Being** and **European Identity**. The selection of the focus area must depend on the focus of their project, more specifically the urban challenge or opportunity that the prospective research addresses:

* 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...
* 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.

### 2.2 Hosting and co-hosting universities and connected mobility options

Besides supporting research talent and professional career development, YUFE4Postdocs intends to initiate or further develop research collaboration between the YUFE universities, with the YUFE postdocs as active contributors.

Therefore, in their application applicants identify a supervisor at a YUFE host university and a co-supervisor at a YUFE co-host university. Applicants must upload one signed letter of support from their supervisor and one signed letter of support from their co-supervisor as part of their application. Template documents are available on the Y4P website.

* The host university will be the YUFE postdoc’s employer. The postdoc will be embedded in the research group or department of their supervisor. The supervisor is the main supervisor of the postdoc in the host university and in the mentoring team of the postdoc.
* A co-supervisor in the YUFE co-host university commits to taking part in the mentoring team of the postdoc. The co-host university hosts the YUFE postdoc within the research group of the co-supervisor when the postdoc undertakes an intra- YUFE mobility.

Candidates can freely choose a research topic under the thematic umbrella and an appropriate YUFE host university. However, the project application needs to fit within the host research group of the supervisor and also connect to the research of the co-supervisor. **The initiation of research collaboration and the development of ongoing collaboration are equally valued in the evaluation process.**

During their three-year positions, the postdocs are facilitated to spend a minimum of one month and a maximum of six months at the co-host institution. This **intra-YUFE mobility** can be undertaken in several ways: one longer visit or several shorter visits in order to accommodate the needs, preferences and limitations of the research training project. The intra-YUFE mobility scheme is supported financially by the host university. **An intra-YUFE mobility is compulsory, with a minimum of one-month physical stay at the co-host university.**

YUFE postdocs can undertake other secondments, which are to be defined in the Career Development Plan (CDP). This CDP is developed within the first three months after the starting date in consultation with the supervisor and can be updated. Any other secondments will have to be approved by the supervisor in the host university, as these may include related costs or support.

The total duration of the secondments (intra-YUFE and other) should be limited to a maximum of one third of the 36-month duration of the program.

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| **Number of positions in the YUFE universities**The call text indicates the number of positions available in every host university for this call.Most YUFE universities welcome candidates for postdoc positions in all of their faculties and research groups. However, please note that: * For call 2 a total of 4 positions are available at Maastricht University: 1 position at the School of Business and Economics (SBE) and 3 positions at the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML). There are no restrictions within these Faculties on which research groups and departments are open to Y4P applications.

For call 2 funding within Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) is not centralised: it is provided on the level of the departments and institutes. All departments and institutes are open for applications, but every department or institute can only co-fund one successful applicant. Candidates applying with UC3M as their host university are advised to reach out to potential supervisors as soon as possible to ascertain if they can apply in this department/institute.Postdoc positions are financed by the host university, or in case of Maastricht University by the Faculties or in case of UC3M by the departments or institutes. The positions or related Y4P allowances (see below) are not to be financed by the supervisor or the supervisor’s research group.**No restrictions for co-supervisors** There is no restriction for co-supervisors, meaning that all YUFE universities, including Maastricht University and UC3M welcome candidates to approach academics in all of their faculties, departments, centres or research groups to ask them to be their co-supervisor. |

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| **Supervisors and co-supervisors**Supervisors are tenured academic staff from the 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. Supervisors of a selected YUFE4Postdoc in call 1 can not be a supervisor for a candidate in call 2. |

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| **How to approach supervisors and co-supervisors**It is advisable that candidates first identify and secure a supervisor, before approaching potential co-supervisors in the other YUFE universities. Applicants can consult the dedicated inventory on the YUFE4Postdocs website and/or approach potential supervisors. They are expected to identify supervisors in the host and co-host universities independently and in a timely manner and take the steps towards securing a letter of support of their supervisors. Navigators are available to assist potential applicants but the responsibility to establish contact lies with the applicant.We recommend starting the process of securing supervisor and co-supervisor as early as possible, as letters of support are required. It is advised that applicants copy Navigators into their correspondence with the potential supervisor and co-supervisor.Navigator contact details are available in the contact section of this guide.  |

### 2.3 The YUFE4Postdoc training program

The YUFE4Postdocs program targets early career postdoc researchers, in line with the rationale that it will assist in shaping their future career in or outside of academia.

The objective is to train the postdocs to interact with the community. ‘Community’ refers to communities of place, identity or interest. It can include organisations from government, business or civil society as well as the general population/lay citizens. These are stakeholder groups or stakeholder representative organisations at local, regional, national or international level.

The YUFE4Postdocs training contains three-pillars:

**Pillar 1** consists of an intake meeting and two physical interactive seminars on Community-Engagement based Research and Innovation (CERI), Open Science and Open innovation, in the first and second years of the appointment.

* First seminar is on Open Science and CERI
* Second seminar is on CERI at the end of the research process, science communication, valorisation and entrepreneurship

**Pillar 2** consists of joint transferable skills trainings;

**Pillar 3** consists of individual training courses at the host or co-host university.

As part of the training program, postdocs will engage with stakeholder representatives:

* Stakeholder representative organisations will be involved in the seminars of Pillar 1.
* Every YUFE postdoc will be connected to one (or more) non-academic mentor(s). This connection will be facilitated after the postdoc’s starting date. During project execution YUFE postdocs will interact with the mentor(s) by reporting on the research conducted and learn from the input provided. The intensity of this interaction can vary.

And/or

Postdocs can undertake an inter-sectoral secondment. The conditions of the secondment will be defined on a case-by-case basis and may depend on the availability of funding by the host university. Six business organisations and ten city or regional councils are involved in the program. They can assist in finding non-academic mentors or in facilitating intersectoral secondments in their network, as will the Knowledge Transfer Offices at the universities. Associated partners will also take part in the Selection Committees that act in the selection procedure (see below).

***Table 2: Program overview***



### 2.4 Conditions of the program

#### 2.4.1 Start date and duration

Postdocs will be awarded a full-time position with a 36-month perspective. Since the postdocs coming out of this call will be trained in cohorts, they must start around the same time. The reference starting date for call 2 postdocs is 1st September 2024.

#### 2.4.2 Employment conditions

The employment conditions in the host university are aligned with or may even exceed national or local regulations for the appointment of postdoc researchers. YUFE postdocs will enjoy the same working conditions, standards of safety and occupational health, administrative support and available services/facilities as other researchers in their host universities. YUFE postdocs will be appointed according to the regular fixed-term salaried employment contract, or equivalent direct contract, in accordance with the national regulations of their host university[[1]](#footnote-2). The university will pay a salary in compliance with common practice within its institution, although some offering above average renumeration and conditions – see Table 2. Aligned with national regulations and social security provisions, hosting universities have specific considerations for family-friendly policies including maternity/parental leave, full social security coverage (including sickness, unemployment and invalidity benefits, pension rights, benefits in respect to accidents at work and occupational diseases).

Furthermore, the following conditions apply:

* YUFE postdocs will be appointed on a full-time basis and will (continue to) work full time unless part-time employment is approved for personal or other reasons by the granting authority of the MSCA COFUND allowance (Research Executive Agency of the EC), the host university and the supervisor in accordance with the MSCA regulation[[2]](#footnote-3). The postdocs must be working exclusively for the research activities and training of YUFE4Postdocs, unless approved otherwise.
* During intra-YUFE mobility and other secondments YUFE postdocs maintain their employment (or similar) contract with the recruiting host university.
* YUFE postdocs must be based at the premises of the host university, but flexible teleworking arrangements are possible in line with regulations of the host universities and in accordance with the MSCA regulation.
* The host universities are responsible for initiating the appointment procedure based on the result of the evaluation & selection procedure. Host universities will facilitate the postdocs to take part in the YUFE4Postdocs training program.

The YUFE postdocs will be entitled to the following allowances and endowments, based upon the EC’s MSCA COFUND regulations.

***Table 2 - Description of allowances***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Allowance** | **Description**  |
| Living allowance | All postdocs will be recruited under an employment contract or other direct contract with equivalent benefits, including social security coverage in the respective host universities. The minimum gross monthly salary offered by each university is **EUR 3.780.** |
| Mobility allowance | All postdocs are entitled to a monthly mobility allowance of **EUR 200** additional to their salary to cover private mobility costs. In most of the host universities this allowance is subject to taxation.  |
| Intra-YUFE mobility allowance | The host university will provide **EUR 1.200**/month (6 months max.) for an intra-YUFE mobility stay at the co-host university for private costs related to the stay. If the mobility is divided into shorter stays, the disbursement of this allowance will be defined in consultation with the host university.  |
| Travel allowance | The host university will provide **EUR 1000**/year in support of the YUFE4Postdocs related travel, minimally for the intra-YUFE mobility. The allowance is managed for the postdoc by the host university. |
| Research allowance | The host university will provide an allowance for costs related to the project of the YUFE postdoc, managed for the postdoc by the host university. This allowance amounts to **EUR 400**/month for research training projects in life sciences and natural sciences & engineering and **EUR 200**/month for research training projects in social sciences & humanities. The level is determined by the host institution.  |

The monthly gross salary at the host university will be subject to compulsory deductions under the respective national law, such as social security contributions and direct taxes.

***Table 3- Minimum monthly gross salary at each host university***

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Partner university** | **Minimum monthly gross salary**  | **Monthly mobility allowance**  |
| University of Antwerp | € 3.780,00 | € 200 |
| Nicolaus Copernicus University | € 3.780,00 | € 200 |
| University of Bremen | € 4.508,00 | € 200 |
| University of Rijeka | € 3.780,00 | € 200 |
| University of Cyprus | € 3.780,00 | € 200 |
| University of Essex | € 3.780,00 | € 200 |
| University of Eastern Finland | € 3.780,00 | € 200 |
| University Carlos III de Madrid | € 3.900,00 | € 200 |
| Maastricht University | € 4332,00 | € 200 |

Table 3 indicates the minimum monthly gross salary at each host university. The actual gross salary will be defined in accordance with the level of seniority of the selected candidates. Apart from the University of Rijeka (UNIRI), Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun (NCU) and the University of Cyprus (UCY), appointed postdocs will receive a salary in accordance with the usual standards of the host university, taking into account the appropriate level of seniority.  UNIRI, NCU and UCY offer a gross salary that exceeds the local average salary of postdocs.

All postdocs will also receive a monthly €200 mobility allowance in addition to the salary.  The mobility allowance is subject to taxation in most of the host universities. Please consult Table 4 for further information.  This allowance is overseen by the postdocs as part of their personal renumeration.

Applicants are invited to contact the designated Navigator for further information regarding the salary conditions in a particular university.

***Table 4 - Employment conditions at each host university***

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| **Partner university**  | **Employment conditions**  |
| University of Antwerp | Postdocs will be appointed with a tax reduced equivalent of an employment contract covered under social security according to university regulations and subject to national legislation (regulated by Belgian fiscal law), also used for MSCA Individual Fellows (IF). It includes full social security coverage: pensions; unemployment benefits; allowances following an accident at work; occupational sickness insurance; compulsory medical insurance; annual holiday. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is not subject to taxation. |
| Nicolaus Copernicus University | Postdocs will be appointed with an employment contract covered under social security, with occupational sickness insurance and annual holiday according to NCU regulation and subject to national legislation. Appointed postdocs are employees of the university and enjoy the same working conditions, standards of safety and occupational health, and institutional services/facilities, as other NCU researchers. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation.  |
| University of Bremen | Postdocs will be appointed with a TV-L contract (wage agreement for public service sector), also offered to MSCA Individual Fellows. Postdocs enjoy full social security coverage: pensions; unemployment benefits; allowances following an accident at work; occupational sickness insurance; compulsory insurance for medical care and benefits; annual holiday. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation. |
| University of Rijeka | Postdocs will be employed through a regular employment contract for postdoc researchers, in accordance with Croatian national labour legislation. Such an employment contract is equal in social and health benefits to other employment contracts for higher education and research positions and includes social security (pension) coverage and health insurance. This includes right to sick leave, maternity/paternity leave, yearly vacation and all other benefits as prescribed by national legislation, collective agreement and internal regulation. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation.  |
| University of Cyprus | Appointed postdocs will be offered an employment contract covered under social security, subject to national legislation. Medical Coverage is provided via the General Health System, according to relevant legislation. Appointed fellows enjoy full social security coverage: pensions; unemployment benefits; allowances following an accident at work; occupational sickness insurance. They shall comply with clauses issued by the University of Cyprus Law 144/89 and its relevant regulations. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation.  |
| University of Essex | Postdocs are appointed to standard University terms and conditions appropriate to the grade. They are entitled to a holiday allowance of 28 days, pro rata for part- time staff (plus a further 8 bank holidays and an extra 3 days when closed during Christmas vacation). As academic staff they will be entitled to join the University Pension Scheme (USS) and the Government's tax initiative 'Cycle to Work' scheme. They will have access to a nursery at Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, which offers day care to children from three months to five years. Additionally, career-focused training and learning activities are available.Some postdoc opportunities lead to the potential of a permanent contract, depending on the needs and capacity of the individual department in which the postdoc is employed. In such cases the postdoc will be placed on a probationary period of three years (pathway to permanency), then enabling them to apply for permanency through the university’s annual review process. If the postdoc has fulfilled all of the objectives in the probationary agreement and is successful in being granted permanency, they will then be appointed to a permanent Lectureship. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation.  |
| University of Eastern Finland | Postdocs as employees of UEF are entitled to Finnish social security system including sick leaves and generous maternity/paternity and parental leaves, as well as comprehensive occupational health care. UEF follows Collective Bargaining Agreement for universities, stating minimum benefits for employees; Employment Contracts Act, Act on Equality between Women and Men, Non-discrimination Act, Occupational Safety and Health Act, among others. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation. |
| University Carlos III de Madrid | Postdocs will be offered an employment contract with social security coverage, in line with the Charter and Code, under Spanish law. All postdocs and immediate family will be covered for state healthcare, may subscribe to additional private health care in or outside of Spain, are eligible for paid maternity/paternity leave and for benefits in case of temporary disability. Postdocs are also insured for accidents at work or occupational illness and for invalidity benefit. Postdocs who have been paying at least the minimum contributions for at least 15 years (in Spain or in any other EU country) will be eligible for a state pension. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation.  |
|  Maastricht University | Postdocs will be offered an employment contract (determined by Collective Labour Agreement of Dutch universities (caoNU). The postdoc is entitled to a broad range of additional benefits. Individual terms of employment cover salary, flexible working hours, commuting, business travel, health insurance, relocation, taxes, pension. The mobility allowance is paid in addition to the regular salary and is subject to taxation. |

*Special needs and disability*

In line with the MSCA regulations, for 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 claimed for from the European Commission by the host institution. This allowance can be used by the host university to ensure necessary staff assistance, or for adapting their work environment.

###### *2.4.3 Working and living conditions*

YUFE Postdocs can conduct their research training activities in excellent working conditions in each YUFE host and co-host university. They will be embedded in stimulating research environments, with access to state-of-the-art research facilities and due attention will be given to health and safety regulations.

They will be provided with an office space, ICT facilities and where relevant, laboratory resources and access to technology platforms within the research group, department or centre of their supervisor in the host- and (when seconded) co-host universities. They may also be able to access other facilities within the host universities, in accordance with their supervisors and regulations in the host and co-host universities.

Once appointed YUFE postdocs will receive support from a dedicated team of Navigators, one of whom is situated at each of the YUFE partner universities. They are also on hand to answer questions relating to the host university (for example, employment conditions, working arrangements and support services e.g., relocation, housing, visas, accommodation, health insurance and mobility issues).

## **3. How to apply**

As part of their application candidates must have identified an engaged supervisor at a YUFE host university, and a co-supervisor at a YUFE co-host university.  See also ‘How to approach supervisors and co-supervisors’, p.11.

Candidates are expected to define their own Research Training Project, although the project must fit within the overarching core theme of urban challenges and opportunities and must fit within the research conducted at the level of the research groups or department of their prospective supervisors in the host and co-host universities.

### 3.1 Eligibility Criteria

Candidates should have a PhD degree at the time of the call deadline. Applicants who have submitted their thesis and who have been allowed to defend before 20th of April 2024 are also eligible.

The call targets promising early career postdoc researchers. They must have obtained their (first) PhD a maximum of 6 years before 20th December 2023. Years of experience outside of research and career breaks (e.g., due to parental and other care or medical related leave) will not count towards the amount of research experience.

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. **However, this mobility rule is not applicable to the co-host university,** meaning that candidates can have a co-supervisor in a YUFE co-host university in the country they are currently residing or working in.

Further information on the requirements for eligibility is listed in the table below. All applications will undergo an eligibility check to ensure that they meet the criteria and rules indicated in the table below. Applicants who do not meet the criteria are not eligible to apply for the YUFE4Postdocs program.

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| Applicants who are offered a position may be required to provide documentary evidence to prove that they meet these criteria. If they cannot provide this, the appointment offer will be withdrawn. |

***Table 5- Criteria and rules for eligibility***

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| **Criterion** | **Rule**  |
| Diploma | Diploma certificate in English (accompanied by a non-certified English translation if the initial document is not in English) OR a statement on headed paper from their supervisor/academic institution confirming that the thesis has been submitted and will be defended before 20th of April 2024 (in English).  |
| Research Experience | Postdocs researchers must have a **maximum of 6 years of experience in research** from the date of award of their (first) doctoral degree. This differs from the 8 years of research experience defined in the MSCA scheme and is a distinct feature of the Y4P program. The limit can be extended (in days) for the following reasons:* Maternity Leave (18 months-i.e., 548 days per child born after the PhD award date, or the exact duration of maternity leave taken, whichever is longest).
* Paternity Leave (exact duration per child born after the PhD award date).
* Compulsory national service.
* Time spent not working in research.
* Long-term sick leave (periods greater than 30 days).

Applicants indicate possible extensions in the CV template. They must not provide further evidence at this stage but may be invited to provide proof at some point in the selection procedure.  |
| MSCA Mobility Rule | Candidates 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 following periods are not taken into account: a) compulsory national service; b) time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention; c) short stays (such as holidays): the applicant did not reside or did not have their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country during that period.Applicants indicate the country location of their residence and main activity in the Structured CV. They must not provide further evidence at this stage but may be invited to provide proof at some point in the selection procedure.  |
| Research Topic | Applicants are free in the design of their research project. However, they must present an original research project pertaining to the program’s overarching theme of Urban Challenges and Opportunities, connected to one of the YUFE Focus Areas. This has to be made explicit in the application. |
| Nationality  | The call is open to researchers of any nationality. |
| Status | As the YUFE postdoc positions contain a training and development component, candidates must not have a permanent position at the start of the appointment at their prospective host university.They have to be able to work exclusively on the research training project in YUFE4Postdocs. YUFE postdocs are appointed with a full-time contract in one of the host universities. They work full time unless part-time employment has been approved for personal or other reasons by the granting authority of the MSCA COFUND allowance (Research Executive Agency of the EC), the host university and the supervisor in accordance with the MSCA regulation[[3]](#footnote-4). Candidates may be employed when applying but should resign and take up a full-time contract with reference to YUFE4Postdocs in the host university when selected. |
| Supervisor Status | Supervisors are tenured academic staff from the 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. 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. Supervisors of a selected YUFE4Postdoc in call 1 can not be a supervisor for a candidate in call 2. |
| Formal application criteria | Completeness of the application, including all required supporting documents submitted before the call deadline using the application portal. All submitted documents must be in English and comply with the editing instructions and other specifications indicated below and/or stated in the application portal or the templates.Templates provided must be used. The ethics self-assessment form template must be included. The applicant carries the responsibility that all documents are correct, complete and up to date. Incomplete applications are not eligible and will not be considered.The research project muss explicitly address the overarching core theme of urban challenges and opportunities.  |

### 3.2 Application materials

An application for YUFE4Postdocs consists of a part A and a part B:

Part A: collects personal information and key information on the research training project via webforms.

Part B: consists of the following application forms:

- Research training project

- Structured CV

- Copy of PhD diploma, if necessary, with a (certified or non-certified) English translation OR a statement on headed paper from their supervisor/academic institution in English

- Commitment letter of supervisor

- Commitment letter of co-supervisor

- Ethics self-assessment form

In the Part B forms, the applicants must provide the following information:

* Structured CV (to be completed in Arial font at a minimum size of 11 point) containing:
* Identity and profile as a scholar
* Main achievements (research, teaching, management and leadership, contribution to wider society-societal impact and or/societal outreach via dissemination and engagement with stakeholders or broader public)
* Motivation for the application, with reference to personal career development and training objectives
* Research Training Project (maximum length of 8 pages- excluding bibliography of references and one figure, to be completed in Arial font at a minimum size of 11 point) addressing:
* Design, innovativeness and planning of the research project, contribution to societal and/or economic impact and nature of stakeholder interaction.
* Fit with the research environment of host university and co-host university, and draft mobility plan.

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| **Commitment letter of supervisor and co-supervisor**Commitment letters are signed by the supervisor or co-supervisor only. No further signatures (e.g., deans or other senior executives in the host or co-host university) are required.Obtaining these commitment letters may take some time and therefore applicants are advised to approach these academics well in advance of the call deadline. |

### 3.3 Online Application System

Applications must be submitted online, via the dedicated application portal. This is available on the YUFE4Postdocs website: <https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/>

* The submission of applications will be possible online from **1st October 2023.**
* Deadline for submission of applications is **12:00 midnight (CET) on Wednesday 20th December 2023.**
* Only one proposal per candidate may be submitted to this call and all documents must be in English.
* Only applications that are complete and submitted by the application deadline via the online portal will be considered.

By the deadline applicants must submit all required documents respecting the foreseen character/page limits and lay-out requirements. These are clearly stated at the top of every template.

No online registration is required to enter the portal. Applicants are invited to work on the required files off-line and upload them together at the same time. The files should be submitted in PDF format of maximum 2 MB each. **Only the last version of an application will be retained for evaluation.**

The portal invites applicants to complete information and upload the template documents via a webform.

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| **Application Templates for Part B**Templates can be downloaded from the application portal using the links below. These are available on the YUFE4Postdocs website:* [Structured CV](https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Structured-CV-Template.docx)
* [Research Training Project](https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Research-Training-Project-Template.docx)
* [Commitment letter of supervisor](https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Commitment-letter-template-supervisor-.docx)
* [Commitment letter of co-supervisor](https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Commitment-letter-template-co-supervisor-.docx)
* [Ethics self-assessment form](https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Ethics-Self-Assessment-form-template.docx)
 |

Step 1 Access the online application systems: go to <https://www.yufe4postdocs.eu/> .

Step 2 Enter your personal information and key project information in the webform.

Step 3 Then upload six documents:

* Structured CV;
* Research Training Project;
* Copy of PhD diploma, including a translation in English in case the diploma does not contain information in English (1 file) OR a statement on headed paper from the applicant’s supervisor/academic institution in English (1 file);
* Commitment letter of supervisor;
* Commitment letter of co-supervisor;
* Ethics self-assessment form.

Each document must be added as a PDF document no larger than 2 MB.

Each document must be saved with a reference to your name:

* The Structured CV should be saved as: ‘Family name of applicant\_cv’.
* The Research Training Project should be saved as: ‘Family name of applicant\_researchproject’.
* The PhD diploma or statement should be saved as: ‘Family name of applicant\_diploma’
* Commitment letter of supervisor should be saved as: ‘Family name of applicant\_supervisor’
* Commitment letter of co-supervisor should be saved as: ‘Family name of applicant\_cosupervisor’
* Ethics self-assessment form should be saved as: ‘Family name of applicantethics’.

Step 4. After having completed the webform and having uploaded the six documents, the application portal will invite the applicants to submit via the submission button.

* The portal will indicate if any documents are missing.

Step 5. Once the application is submitted the portal will send an email confirming the submission of the application.

* The email confirming submission will contain an invitation to complete additional information on diversity & inclusivity – see section 4.3.

If you encounter any problems with the online portal, please contact yufe4postdocs@uantwerpen.be

## **4. Ethics, diversity & inclusivity**

### 4.1 Ethics

The YUFE4Postdocs program operates with respect to the highest standards of research integrity and ethical conduct as described in the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/) and the [Global Code of Conduct](https://www.globalcodeofconduct.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Global-Code-of-Conduct-Brochure.pdf). Furthermore, it endorses the ethical principles of Horizon Europe as outlined in the [Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj).

All activities carried out within the program shall comply with the above principles and must comply with relevant national, EU and international legislations.

For more detailed information on how to fill in the ethics self-assessment component of the application, please consult the Horizon Europe guidance document: [How to complete your ethics self-assessment[[4]](#footnote-5).](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf)

The following activities are not eligible for EU funding and cannot therefore be included in proposals:

* Activities directed at human cloning for reproductive purposes
* Activities intended to modify the genetic make-up of human beings that could make such changes heritable (apart from research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed)
* Activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or stem cell procurement, including the technique of somatic cell nuclear transfer
* Activities that lead to the destruction of human embryos

Ethical issues will be addressed at different stages in the application and selection process:

* As part of the application, applicants are requested to fill out an ethics self-assessment form to identify ethical matters relating to their research project, followed by some open-ended questions to elaborate on potential ethics and diversity matters. The template document is available in the application portal. **Applicants are invited to contact the local YUFE4Postdocs** [[**Ethics & Diversity delegate**](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=nl-nl&rs=nl-NL&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fuantwerpen.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FYufe4PostdocsProjectGroupTeam2%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Ffef8459bbe724569bed8561f8744bf56&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=0c073664-f0d9-49b2-9546-85be01eeeed5.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=nl-nl&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=3f216d4b-a98e-4988-b558-d15519ea6bca&usid=3f216d4b-a98e-4988-b558-d15519ea6bca&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=UnifiedUiHostTeams&muv=v1&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hsh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.office.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-ELECTRON.teamsSdk.openFilePreview&wdhostclicktime=1673518386468&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_YUFE4POSTDOCS_Ethics_&)](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=nl-nl&rs=nl-NL&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fuantwerpen.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FYufe4PostdocsProjectGroupTeam2%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Ffef8459bbe724569bed8561f8744bf56&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=0c073664-f0d9-49b2-9546-85be01eeeed5.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=nl-nl&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=3f216d4b-a98e-4988-b558-d15519ea6bca&usid=3f216d4b-a98e-4988-b558-d15519ea6bca&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=UnifiedUiHostTeams&muv=v1&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hsh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.office.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-ELECTRON.teamsSdk.openFilePreview&wdhostclicktime=1673518386468&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_YUFE4POSTDOCS_Ethics_&) **in case of questions**.
* It is advisable to complete the ethics self-assessment form well before the call deadline because answering some of the questions might require a consultation from the supervisor(s) and/or from the Ethics and Diversity delegates listed at the end of this document.
* The Ethics & Diversity delegates will carry out an eligibility check on the submitted self-assessments. Eligibility depends on the completion of the ethics checklist, compliance with local requirements and an indication of ethical issues conform the project.
* Successful applicants will be required to review their initial ethics checklist with their supervisor within the first month immediately following their starting date. The supervisor will guide the postdoc through the appropriate ethical approval process by filling out a research ethics application form applicable to the host university.
* Any project assessed to necessitate ethical approval must be in receipt of ethical authorisation before the corresponding element of the project may start.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to identify in the ethics self-assessment form any potential ethical issue(s), and to indicate how these aspects will be addressed. This responsibility extends to the duration of the appointment of successful applicants and includes the notification of any newly arising ethical issue(s).

Successful applicants, as members of the YUFE community, will be expected to uphold the YUFE values and behave in ways that are consistent with the [YUFE Code of Conduct, and where the behavior of others falls short, to encourage them to do the same.](https://www.yufe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/YUFE-Code-of-Conduct.pdf)

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| ImportantThe ethics self-assessment form must be filled in regardless of whether or not ethical issues are identified in the project. If there is nothing to be reported, it should be stated in the self-assessment. Failure to comply will lead to rejection of the proposal during the eligibility check (step 1). |

### 4.2  Ensuring equal opportunities

The YUFE4Postdocs program operates within the [YUFE Diversity & Inclusivity Strategy](https://www.yufe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/YUFE-Diversity-and-Inclusivity-Strategy.pdf), ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants. The following measures are taken:

**Equality of opportunity to** **apply:** encouraging applications from underrepresented groups; offering the possibility for applicants to contact the Ethics & Diversity delegates to request assistance and/or the possibility of a more suitable format of the call information.

**Equality of treatment during selection**: all members of the selection committee will complete mandatory training on Unconscious Bias; a balanced composition of the selection committee is aimed for in terms of gender and diversity.

**Equality of support for successful candidates**: appointed postdocs will have access to peer support opportunities, such as YUFE’s Diverse Perspectives program and employee networks at their host university. We will provide support for special needs in the working environment (including a European Commission facilitated special needs allowance), accessible guidance for the use of family-friendly policies and we will adhere to the principles for the guidance of researchers at risk.

### 4.3 Diversity & inclusivity

YUFE aspires to be the leading model of an open, diverse, inclusive, student-centered European University. To support this, our Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy commits us to gaining a better understanding of the diversity profile of our staff and students and taking steps to address identified under-representation.

To enable us to do this we ask applicants to disclose diversity-related information. Applicants are invited to share this information in a separate survey platform (via Qualtrics), but it is not compulsory to provide it. These include gender identity, ethnic background, socio-economic background and disability status. They are collected for analysis purposes only and will increase our understanding of our community and of how effective we are in our efforts to be inclusive. This information is collected anonymously, will be held securely and treated as strictly confidential. It will not be shared with evaluators of the applications or with any other parties. For further information on data processing see below.

### 4.4 Use and protection of personal data

The University of Antwerp is coordinator and data controller for the project YUFE4Postdocs. The data will be collected and stored through the IT-infrastructure of this university. All current safety measures will be taken to ensure the protection of your data during the application phase. Data will be stored for a period of 10 years, until 31/12/2033 in line with EC requirements on possible audits on the project execution.

The information provided in the application process will be available only for the University of Antwerp Y4P management team and the people involved in the selection process in the respective host universities. The legal ground for this processing is informed consent. At the start of the application in the Yufe4Postdocs portal you will be asked to consent to the processing of the data that you provide.

Data are processed as follows:

* Parts of the application: Research Training Project; Structured CV; Ethics Self-assessment will be shared with designated staff of (only) the prospective YUFE host university for an eligibility check.
* If an application is deemed eligible both key data of Part A (contact details, keywords, abstract) and the Research Training Project and Structured CV will be shared with the peer review organisation contracted by UAntwerpen to manage step 2 of the selection process, and with the members of the relevant Selection Committee for step 3 of the selection process.

The optional data on diversity and inclusivity collected in a separate survey platform (via Qualtrics) will not be linked to the application file. The data protection officer of UAntwerpen will act as a trusted third party and ascertain the data for anonymity before further processing. The optional data on diversity and inclusivity will then be shared only with the Ethics and Diversity coordinators from the universities of Antwerp and Essex.

By applying for this call applicants are informed that these data will be collected with the stated goals and processing of personal data. Applicants have the right to access, correction and deletion of personal data. The data collected is stored securely and will be used only for the purpose stated in the application.

Applicants can address questions regarding the processing of personal data to the YUFE4Postdocs Program Manager Hannah.WhittleLetchford@uantwerpen.be and to the data protection officer: privacy@uantwerpen.be

## **5. Evaluation and selection process**

Applications for YUFE4Postdocs will be evaluated according to novel standards of research assessment, as promoted by the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (COARA) and drawing on the YUFERING assessment tool created in the context of the Horizon 2020’s YUFERING project [[5]](#footnote-6). The evaluation process is designed in order to recognise a broad variety of achievements that applicants have, rather than purely assessing them based on core areas of research and teaching. In particular, skills and experience relating to community engagement, societal outreach, teamwork, management and leadership are recognised. This system is based on structured narrative CVs, which provides more room to display different types of achievements.

Building upon this notion, the quality of the applicants will not be measured by journal metrics but will focus on broader achievements. Applicants are invited to describe their various contributions by outlining a maximum of 3 top achievements in the field of research, in teamwork and leadership and in societal impact.

### 5.1 Procedural steps

***Table 6 –Steps and key factors relating to the evaluation and selection process (see below)***

******

**Step 1: Administrative Eligibility Check**

The check is completed by sending a formal notification to the applicants by email.

The administrative eligibility is checked by assessing:

* Completeness of the requested information in the webforms (Part A)
* Completeness of the application including all required supporting documents submitted before the call deadline using the application portal (Part B).
* All submitted documents must be in English and comply with the editing instructions and other specifications below and/or stated in the application portal.
* Compliance with the MSCA mobility rule.
* Compliance with the maximum total 6 years of research experience from the date of award of the (first) doctoral degree.
* The proposed research training project refers to one or more urban challenges/opportunities in the Research training project template (under Quality and pertinence of the project’s research and innovation objectives).

**Step 2: External peer review –** The external peer review process is outsourced to an experienced peer review organisation. Applications are assessed by three independent external peer reviewers. These are academics or senior researchers in higher education institutions or research performing organisations. The assessments of the external referees feed into the YUFE Selection Committee (SC).

**Step 3: Selection Committees**

* Two interdisciplinary selection committees (SC) are set up for each call: one SC per Focus area.
* Academic members of the SC will prepare an integrated Evaluation Summary Report with a proposed score for a segment of the applications, based on the reviews and the scores of the external peers.
* The non-academic SC members will issue advice from a non-academic perspective, e.g., the potential contribution of the research project to societal and/or economic impact, identification of stakeholders and proposed stakeholder interaction during the project.
* The SC will then discuss and formulate a consensus evaluation and scores per application.
* Each SC in its respective Focus Area draws up a ranking of applications per YUFE university, based on the consensus evaluation and scores.

**Step 4: Consolidation of ranking lists**

The chairs of the twoSCs will produce a final ranking list of candidates per YUFE host university. Since step 3 will result in a ranking per Focus Area, the chairpersons will merge the two rankings for each university on the basis of the total scores assigned to each application by the respective SCs. In the case of exact draws, priority will be given to the Focus Area which is lesser represented in the list of ranked candidates for that host university and in the case of equal numbers of applications for a certain host university, to the Focus Area which is lesser represented across each of the 10 lists of ranked candidates. The list of ranked candidates per YUFE host university is then handed over to each YUFE host university.

**Step 5: Appointment procedure**

The host universities accept the outcome of the above selection procedure and initiate the appointment procedure.

One host university specifies that candidates must complete a further step in compliance with legal requirements. This additional step will not require a new application by candidates, nor will it impact on the timing of the starting date.

***Table 7 - Partner university with an additional step***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YUFE host university | Procedural step 5 |
| University of Essex | An interview with the candidate(s) is required before a labour contract can be offered.  |

### 5.2 Evaluation criteria

The applications will be assessed on the basis of the following threecriteria:

***Table 8 - Criteria and weighting***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| 1. Qualifications and motivation of the applicant
 | 40 % |
| 1. Quality of the project and stakeholder interaction
 | 40 % |
| 1. Integration within the research environment at the potential host university and the co-host university
 | 20% |

All applications will be evaluated according to the criteria indicated in the tables below. Scores will be awarded for each of the three evaluation criteria: 5 points per evaluation criterion, with the weighting values shown above. Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 5 (half point scores may be given), building on the proven Horizon Europe methodology:

|  |
| --- |
| **Scoring and interpretation** |
| **0** **–** Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.**1 – Poor**. The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.**2 – Fair**. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.**3 – Good**. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.**4 – Very good**. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.**5 – Excellent**. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor. |

In order to ensure that only high-quality applications are funded, applications not meeting the following individual and overall **thresholds** will be rejected: (i) The minimum threshold of each individual evaluation criterion is 3 points; (ii) The threshold of the overall score is 10 points out of a total of 15 points before weighting is applied.

### 5.3 Components of the application

Evaluators in steps 2 and 3 will assess the three criteria mentioned in section 4.2 on the basis of the Structured CV and the Research Training Project description.

#### 5.3.1 Structured CV

This section is expected to illustrate the **qualifications and motivation of the applicant**. Previous achievements of the applicant in terms of research, teamwork and leadership and societal impact are included. It also requests a motivation for applying for a YUFE4Postdocs position. This section is entirely integrated in the template of the Structured CV.

|  |
| --- |
| The Structured CV should be completed as a word file. Once complete, applicants must save it as a PDF file and upload it on the YUFE4Postdocs application portal, alongside the other required documents. **The file name should be in this format: ‘Family name of applicant\_cv’**. Full instructions regarding the completion of the CV can be found in the template.  |

#### 5.3.2. Research Training Project

|  |
| --- |
| The Research Training Project should be completed as a word file. Once complete, applicants must save it as a PDF file and upload it on the YUFE4Postdocs application portal, alongside the other required documents. **The file name should be in this format: ‘Family name of applicant\_researchproject’.** Full instructions regarding the completion of the Research Training Project can be found in the template.  |

**Quality and innovativeness of the project and stakeholder interaction**

This part of application is entirely integrated into section 1 of the Research Training Project template. The template contains full instructions regarding completion.

It should consist of a **maximum of 8 pages** (excluding bibliographic references and an image/ figure). Applicants should address the following components:

* Quality and pertinence of the projects research and innovation objectives (maximum 2 pages)
* Soundness of proposed methodology, procedures, and feasibility (maximum 2 pages + 1 figure of maximum 1 page)
* Contribution to societal and/or economic impact, as well as identification of non-academic stakeholders and the proposed stakeholder interaction (maximum 2 pages)

|  |
| --- |
| Applicants need to identify one or more urban challenge(s) or opportunity/ies. The eligibility check (step 1) will consider this section. Applications without explicit reference to urban challenge(s) or opportunity/ies will not be considered eligible.The non-academic selection committee members will issue advice from a non-academic perspective, with regard to contribution of the research project to potential societal and/or economic impact, identification of stakeholders and proposed stakeholder interaction during the project.  |

**Integration within the research environment of host university and co-host university**

This section of the application is entirely integrated into section 2 of the Research Training Project template. It should consist of a **maximum of 2 pages** and applicants should address the following components:

* thematic fit with the research group at host university
* thematic fit with the research group of the co-host university
* potential to initiate OR further develop cooperation between host and co-host university
* include a brief draft personal mobility plan with the rationale for the mandatory intra-YUFE mobility and potentially other mobility

|  |
| --- |
| ImportantThe potential initiation of research collaboration between the two host institutions and the potential for deepening or furthering an existing collaboration between host- and co-host university will be equally valued by peer reviewers.  |

### 5.4 Feedback and Appeal

All applicants will receive notifications and feedback throughout the selection process as follows:

At the end of the external peer review phase (step 2) applicants will have access to the anonymized external assessments.  They will have the opportunity to formulate a response (rebuttal) to the assessments performed to correct perceived factual errors or misunderstandings that may appear in the external assessments. This reply will be submitted online and will be written in English and consist of no more than 900 words. Applicants will be informed well in advance about the expected timing of the rebuttal period. The rebuttals will be presented to the Selection Committees, together with the assessment reports of the peer reviewers.

Upon conclusion of the final evaluation step 3, applicants will receive an Evaluation Summary Report that contains the evaluation information drawn up by the Selection Committee and the anonymised assessment by the external peer reviewers.

Applicants are able to request an appeal within a 30-day period after receiving the formal notification. This request will be addressed by the Appeal Committee and will either result in the rejection of the request, with due motivation sent as formal notification to the applicant; or the request is declared admissible and justified and corrective action will be taken. The Appeal Committee is composed of a representative from every YUFE university, either a senior executive of research or a director of HR.

The appeal can be addressed to the YUFE4Postdocs Program Manager, based at UAntwerpen: Hannah.WhittleLetchford@uantwerpen.be

## **6. Contacts**

All general enquiries regarding the Y4P program should be sent to the helpdesk: yufe4postdocs@uantwerpen.be

**Navigators**

Each host university has an assigned Navigator who assists potential applicants. They are available throughout the application process, and beyond. Navigators have a dual role.

First, they can assist applicants in finding a supervisor and/or co-supervisor if the applicant has been unable to find one.

It is advised that applicants copy the appropriate Navigator into emails when contacting a potential supervisor and co-supervisor.

Secondly, they are available for questions relating to the host university (for example employment conditions, working arrangements and support services e.g., relocation, housing, visas and mobility).

Please contact the appropriate Navigator listed below if you have any queries relating to the application procedure.

***Table 14 Navigator contact details***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **University** | **Navigator** | **Email Address** |
| University of Antwerp, Belgium | Hannah Whittle | Hannah.WhittleLetchford@uantwerpen.be |
| Nicolaus Copernicus University,Torún, Poland | Lucyna Kejna |  Y4P@umk.pl |
| University of Bremen, Germany | Jana Sievers | jana.sievers@vw.uni-bremen.de |
| University of Rijeka, Croatia | Karmen Pupovac | karmen.pupovac@uniri.hr |
| University of Cyprus, Cyprus | Ioanna Papaphilippou and Christina Delaporta | joannah@ucy.ac.cydelaport@ucy.ac.cy |
| University of Essex, United Kingdom | Dave Briggs | yufe4postdoc@essex.ac.uk |
| University of Eastern Finland, Finland | Helena Jäntti | helena.jantti@uef.fi |
| Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain | Ana López Bellmont | anlopezb@pa.uc3m.es |
| Maastricht University, Netherlands  | Andreas Bressler | andreas.bressler@maastrichtuniversity.nl |

**Ethics & Diversity Delegates**

Each host university has an assigned Ethics & Diversity delegate. Please contact the appropriate delegate listed below if you have any queries relating to the ethics component of the application procedure:

***Table 15 - Ethics and diversity delegates contact details***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **University** | **Ethics and Diversity Delegate** | **Email Address** |
| University of Antwerp, Belgium | Sarah Claes | sarah.claes@uantwerpen.be |
| Nicolaus Copernicus University,Torun, Poland | Karolina Jarzynka | Karolina.jarzynka@umk.pl |
| University of Bremen, Germany | Martin Groenwoldt | martin.groenwoldt@vw.uni-bremen.de |
| University of Rijeka, Croatia | Vanja Pupovac | vanja.pupovac@medri.uniri.hr |
| University of Cyprus, Cyprus | Georgia Charalambidou | charalambidou.georgia@ucy.ac.cy  |
| University of Essex, United Kingdom | Karen Bush | kbush@essex.ac.uk |
| University of Eastern Finland, Finland | Mika Saikkonen | mika.saikkonen@uef.fi |
| Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain | Guillermo Carpintero del Barrio | guiller@ing.uc3m.es |
| Maastricht University, Netherlands  | Andreas Bressler | andreas.bressler@maastrichtuniversity.nl |

1. Belgium offers a specific regime for citizens from non-EU countries and from countries with no bilateral agreement with the host country. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/agr-contr/unit-mga\_he\_en.pdf](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Finfo%2Ffunding-tenders%2Fopportunities%2Fdocs%2F2021-2027%2Fhorizon%2Fagr-contr%2Funit-mga_he_en.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Canne.adams%40uantwerpen.be%7C0cc65564dba74828b9ff08daf3b24292%7C792e08fb2d544a8eaf72202548136ef6%7C0%7C0%7C638090244199750941%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=okcKEU03MMb5TNSthgL6kj2YRsnBdxt2uvd4Kod9MFM%3D&reserved=0) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/agr-contr/unit-mga\_he\_en.pdf](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Finfo%2Ffunding-tenders%2Fopportunities%2Fdocs%2F2021-2027%2Fhorizon%2Fagr-contr%2Funit-mga_he_en.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Canne.adams%40uantwerpen.be%7C0cc65564dba74828b9ff08daf3b24292%7C792e08fb2d544a8eaf72202548136ef6%7C0%7C0%7C638090244199750941%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=okcKEU03MMb5TNSthgL6kj2YRsnBdxt2uvd4Kod9MFM%3D&reserved=0) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment\_en.pdf (europa.eu)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [YUFE Transforming Research and Innovation through Europe-wide Knowledge Transfer | YUFERING Project | Fact Sheet | H2020 | CORDIS | European Commission (europa.eu)](https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101016967) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)