

# KAUST Global Fellowship Program

## Application Guidelines

**Accepting Applications Annually: October 1<sup>st</sup> – January 15<sup>th</sup>**

KAUST Global Fellowship Program ([www.kgfp.kaust.edu.sa](http://www.kgfp.kaust.edu.sa)) is an initiative from the Office of the Vice President for Research aiming to attract and support postdoctoral researchers towards a fully independent research career.

### Location:

The Program is taking place at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia.

Contact info: [kgfp@kaust.edu.sa](mailto:kgfp@kaust.edu.sa)

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**PLEASE NOTE:** the guidelines are updated periodically. Please ensure you are reading the latest version.

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## ELIGIBILITY

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### The Applicant

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To be considered for this Fellowship, applicants must meet the following criteria:

#### *PhD degree*

Applicants must have been awarded a PhD degree from a well-recognized university, within four\* years prior to the date the application is submitted.

Applicants who have not yet been awarded their PhD degree, must be awarded by the time the Fellowship starts, but not necessarily at the time the application is submitted.

\*Exceptions to the four years rule are made for applicants with well justified career breaks during the relevant period due to parental leave, mandatory military / civil service etc. in which case the time of the career break will not be counted. Additional exceptions might be made on a case – by – case basis for extraordinary personal circumstances, such as demonstrable severe illness or full-time care of an ill family member. No other exceptions will be made for other types of voluntary career breaks. The Fellowship Office can provide further information on eligible career breaks.

In any case, applicants should have less than four years of post-doctoral research experience at the time of the application.

#### *Publications*

Applicants must have and submit during their application two first (or joint first) author primary research papers accepted for publication or published in an international peer reviewed journal at the time the application is submitted.

Other publications might be accepted according to the field of the applicant.

The following items should not be listed as publications:

- Papers submitted or in preparation and therefore not accessible to the community (not yet peer reviewed or accepted).
- Papers published not in English originally.
- Abstracts of presentations at conferences.

#### *KAUST Host PI*

A [KAUST faculty member](#) must agree to host the candidate and their project.

Candidates must identify in their application the KAUST faculty member who confirmed and agreed to host them and their research project, if successful. As evidence, candidates will need to include in their application a copy of the email confirmation from the PI or use the KAUST host PI support letter template as provided.

The host PI will act as mentor of the Fellow, especially in relation to research activities, and assist and facilitate administrative aspects of the Fellowship related to procurement and spending.

### **Mobility**

Successful candidates are expected to relocate in Saudi Arabia\* to live and work at KAUST and undertake work in one of the research laboratories and research centers of the University.

Participating to the Fellowship Program under a different institution or in another country is not permitted.

People of all nationalities are welcome to apply. We encourage female applications for a better gender balance in science.

**\*Candidates need to satisfy all [the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia requirements](#) to obtain resident status.**

### **Reference Letters**

The candidate will also need to provide two professional reference letters, at least one of which is not from their direct supervisor (present or past), confirming the candidate's suitability and capability to undertake an independent research project.

Reference letters must include the **candidate's name, proposal title and referee details (title, name, position, contact details)**. Additionally, referees should mention details about their relationship to the applicant, applicant's academic excellence and the research proposal by answering the below questions:

- Briefly describe your academic/ professional relationship to the applicant including how long you have known them and any work you have done with them or other collaborations,
- Does the applicant possess the necessary skills and ability to perform research as an independent investigator and deliver project outcomes meeting milestones and deliverables?
- Please highlight how the research proposal would answer significant research questions and/or the research potential to address global issues related to any of the following areas: **Water, Energy, Environment, Food & Health, and the Digital domain.**

**All referees must submit their supporting letters in advance of the deadline via email at [kgfp@kaust.edu.sa](mailto:kgfp@kaust.edu.sa) clearly mentioning in English their FULL NAME and INSTITUTION as well as the APPLICANT'S FULL NAME and APPLICATION NUMBER.**

**Candidates will receive the application number once they completely submit their application.**

## The Research Proposal

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For a research proposal to be eligible under this Fellowship, it should meet the below requirements:

### *Research Areas*

KAUST Global Fellowship Program is supporting research in line with the programs of KAUST academic divisions; [Biological and Environmental Science and Engineering \(BESE\)](#), [Computer, Electrical and Mathematical Science and Engineering \(CEMSE\)](#), and [Physical Science and Engineering \(PSE\)](#).

More specific, funded research projects should fall within or across one or more of the KAUST five Research Pillars: **Water, Energy, the Environment, Food & Health, and the Digital domain**

### *Duration and budget*

Research projects must have a **duration of 3 years** and must follow the budget and financial guidelines of the call.

### *Submission*

Applications must be written in English and no special formatting is allowed. Additionally, figures and tables (if included in the proposal) should not exceed the maximum page limit. Project proposal and supporting documentation must be drafted using the provided templates.

Any application received after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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Applicants must complete the [online application form](#) according to the instructions provided. Applications must be submitted electronically, and **under no circumstances will any applications be accepted after the deadline.**

**The Fellowship Program is accepting applications annually between  
October 1<sup>st</sup> and January 15<sup>th</sup>**

Before submitting their application, applicants must ensure that they meet all the eligibility requirements as described in the previous section.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring all required application components have been submitted ahead of the deadline. **All required documents must be submitted in a combined PDF file not exceeding 25MB following the below order:**

- CV (max 4 pages\*)
- Two publications (links or attachments)
- KAUST Host PI letter or other evidence of support/ confirmation of hosting the candidate by a KAUST Faculty member
- Research proposal

*Two reference letters must also be submitted by email at [kgfp@kaust.edu.sa](mailto:kgfp@kaust.edu.sa) directly by the referees following the directions under the ELIGIBILITY section of this Guide.*

**\*CV must not exceed the 4 pages including contact details, innovation/commercialization activity, teaching/mentoring/lecturing experience, key achievements, important publications, participation in conferences or other scientific communication materials)**

No application will be considered for evaluation without all the required information, including evidence of the support of a KAUST Faculty member and the two reference letters.

## SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

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A maximum of 10 Global Fellowships will be awarded each year. The primary selection criteria applied by the Global Fellowship Committee are scientific excellence of the candidate, the proposed project and the host PI suitability.

Notably, the following aspects are considered:

### *Scientific achievements of the applicant*

- Quality, originality, and output of candidate's research to date based on scientific contributions and CV
- Candidate's ability to carry out independent research and future potential based on reference letters
- Previous awards or scholarships
- Other unique attributes or contributions to the research environment of the candidate

### *Proposed Research Projects*

- Scientific quality, approach, novelty and significance of the proposed research proposal
- Relevance in relation to KAUST priorities
- Dissemination of research project results
- Project feasibility and work plan quality
- Budget practicality and reasonableness
- Potential for innovation and development of research outputs

### *Host PI suitability*

- Suitability of the host PI and research lab for the proposed research project and the applicant's scientific background.

Fellowships are awarded to candidates. However, applications to work with host PIs which the candidate has collaborated in the past or to develop a project on a similar topic to the candidate's PhD work will receive lower priority for funding. Likewise, projects that are a continuation of an applicant's PhD research are discouraged and, if received, will receive lower priority for funding.

## Evaluation timeline (times are approximate)

### **0-5 weeks after cutoff date. First stage: processing and pre-screening**

All applications will be screened to ensure eligibility requirements are met and the application is completed in terms of required documentation and use of the provided templates.

Each eligible application is then assessed by the assigned *Internal Division Committees*.

During the pre-screening, the committee will review a condensed application form, that will include: a summary of the applicant's main scientific achievements and list of publications, summary/ abstract of the proposed work, justification for the choice of the host PI, as well as reference and acceptance letters.

***A maximum of 12 proposals per division will be selected for external review evaluation.***

### **6-14 weeks after cutoff date. Second stage of evaluation: External review evaluation**

The proposals reaching this evaluation stage will be sent for external review to external academics and leading researchers in the respective fields. At least two independent external reviews will be requested.

***A maximum of 7 candidates per division will be selected and invited for an interview.***

### **15-20 weeks after cutoff date. Third stage of evaluation: Interview**

Shortlisted candidates who successfully pass the external review evaluation stage, will be invited to an interview session. Interviews will take place through videoconference only. Candidates must give a presentation as part of the interview procedure. The interview will take place at the interviewer's convenience.

### **21-22 weeks after cutoff date. Fourth stage of evaluation: Selection**

An Internal Fellowship Committee will meet to evaluate in full each application, taking into consideration the final evaluation of the selected candidates including the interview scores and recommendations from the Panels. During the meeting, the committee will take the final decision and prepare a preliminary list of awarded applications. All applicants are officially informed about the outcome by email within one week of the committee meeting.

***A total of up to 10 Fellowships will be given each year.***

Successful applicants must start their fellowship between September - December of the same year and will be publicly announced as they join the program.

## BENEFITS

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**A maximum of 10 Global Fellowships will be available and awarded each year. Selection is based on merit criteria only.**

### *Fellowship Duration*

Fellowships are awarded for a period of 3 years, with an evaluation at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

The nominated Global Fellows shall accept the Fellowship within 1 month from the announcement of the results.

Nominated Fellows are permitted to start their Fellowship as early as soon as they obtain their resident status visa and according to the onboarding and HR procedures of the Kingdom and KAUST. All candidates are expected to join the Fellowship program at the latest by the end of the Cohort Call's year.

### *Stipend and Research Budget*

KAUST Global Fellowship provides a *3-year fixed-term contract* and an *annual stipend* of 75,000 USD (6,250 USD monthly) with additional benefits including medical insurance, relocation allowance, schooling, and accommodation according to individual or family situation.

Furthermore, Global Fellows will be assigned an *annual research budget* split in different cost categories as follows:

- Conferences and work-related travel 5,000 USD
- Use of KAUST Core Labs facilities 10,000 USD
- Consumables, depending on the research topic as below:
  - 10,000 USD for computational sciences
  - 15,000 USD for experimental/ physical sciences
  - 30,000 USD for biological/ life sciences

### *Relocation and travel allowance*

The relocation allowance is a flat rate of 3,000 USD to cover any costs related to the Fellow and their family relocation to KAUST (travel costs i.e. tickets are booked and covered directly by the University). If the applicant is already in KAUST at the time the application is submitted, the relocation allowance will not be paid.

Global Fellows and their eligible dependents are also entitled to an annual travel allowance paid once per year as part of their stipend.

### *Career and professional development*

KAUST Global Fellowship Program offers for free the opportunity to participate in a variety of programs and certified courses for its Global Fellows. Programs and courses include but are not limited to:

- KAUST Postdoc Mentoring Program
- Harvard Higher Education Teaching Certificate
- Leadership Programs/ Certificates (e.g. Imperial Management & Leadership Development Courses, Oxford Executive Leadership Program, Stanford Executive Leadership, EMBO Lab Leadership Course)



## FELLOWSHIP EXPECTATIONS

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Alongside unique benefits, KAUST Global Fellows are expected to:

1. Maintain a high level of academic excellence at KAUST throughout the program. This will be evaluated and closely monitored through yearly progress reports.
2. Conduct and implement their research project at KAUST, Saudi Arabia, using available resources and provided facilities.
3. Participate in program-sponsored enrichment activities organized to create a welcoming environment for the ensemble of the cohort. Participation in programs to develop skills, promote leadership and encourage interdisciplinary research are available and expected from Fellows to undertake.
4. Give public lectures and presentations about their research inside and outside KAUST, using their allowance for travelling to conferences, reaching out to the international academic community using all communication means, including personal accounts and social media as well as tools already used by KAUST.
5. Acknowledge the support of the KAUST Global Fellowship program to any publications that are a result of research activities funded by the Program. Fellows may also be asked to submit abstracts of their work to the VPR's office for further promotion and use in promotional material and the Fellowship website.
6. Get involve in Alumni Activities as part of a growing global community of Fellows, and act as ambassadors for the KAUST Global Fellowship Program. Alumni often share their experiences with others, publicize the program to their colleagues and participate in information sessions for new candidates.
7. Engage in the academic and general community life of KAUST in voluntary, non-political/non-partisan nature activities.

## KING ABDULLAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KAUST)

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King Abdullah University of Science and Technology is an international, graduate-only research university with researchers from over 100 nationalities, located on the shores of the Red Sea in Saudi Arabia. KAUST was established in 2009 and is largely recognized for its science and engineering excellence, unparalleled laboratory facilities and equipment, and for its contribution to global challenges in domains including Water, Energy, Environment, Food & Health, and Digital.

KAUST attracts top international faculty, scientists, engineers, and students to conduct curiosity-driven and goal-oriented research to address world's pressing scientific and technological challenges. KAUST offers outstanding research facilities and internationally competitive research funding and salaries. The KAUST campus is designed to inspire and motivate students, employees and their families in a multi-cultural and interdisciplinary community-based environment.

For more information about KAUST: <https://www.kaust.edu.sa/en>