Extract from the
SUPPORT GUIDELINES FOR JUNIOR SCIENTISTS
OF THE MAX PLANCK SOCIETY

POSTDOC FUNDING

The Max Planck Society (MPS) offers grants and employment contracts at its Institutes and facilities for the postdoctoral career phase (based on the salary scale for civil servants). The aim is to promote advanced scientific training for junior scientists.

The following is an explanation of the relevant extracts from the Support Guidelines for Junior Scientists in order to ensure transparency and clarify the differences. Please note that the Support Guidelines for Junior Scientists are regularly adapted to the latest changes and developments in legislation and funding policy.

If you have any specific questions, please consult the personnel department at your Institute. They will be glad to provide you with information on the Support Guidelines for Junior Scientists of the Max Planck Society. For general comments you may also contact the Personnel Department at Administrative Headquarters (Tel: 089/2108 1322 or career@gv.mpg.de).

REQUIREMENTS

In order to obtain postdoc funding you must have demonstrated that you are qualified to conduct independent scientific research by having completed doctoral studies. This is the case if you have successfully passed the oral doctoral examination.

The purpose of Max Planck Society postdoc funding is to enable the individual concerned to acquire additional skills and knowledge based on an existing qualification, i.e. doctoral studies. The completion of the latter may not have occurred more than ten years prior to the first time a grant is awarded. As stipulated by the Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz (WissZVG – Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act), a funding contract may only be concluded during the so-called second qualification phase - generally speaking up to six years after the completion of doctoral studies.
I. FUNDING VIA A POSTDOC GRANT

1. AWARD OF THE GRANT

A grant is awarded if the Institute wishes to promote particularly promising junior scientists - especially those from abroad - as part of their scientific plans by involving them in a research project and thereby securing their longer-term commitment. This also applies where the research project selected by a potential grantee provides an important supplement to the Institute's research work but where full incorporation in the Institute is not required since interest is focused on the topic and results of the research itself.

Max Planck Society grantees largely conduct their research autonomously, schedule their research time themselves and do not apply for vacation or official trips. The award of a grant does not entail conclusion of an employment contract with the Max Planck Society. Any specialist and security-related instructions given by the institute therefore do not constitute contractual instructions but are intended as support in achieving the purpose of the grant.

By accepting the grant, grantees undertake to dedicate themselves fully to its purpose. Activities not covered by the purpose of the grant require the prior consent of the Institute management. Exceptions are only possible if the activity serves the purpose of the grant. Grantees may not undertake other work for the Max Planck Society – even working on a minimal basis is not permitted. The grant is not remuneration for scientific work but a contribution to living costs.

2. AMOUNT AND DURATION OF THE GRANT

A grant is generally awarded for two years. Extension is possible up to one year in the case of justified exceptions. The grantee is informed of the amount and duration of the grant in writing.

Part-time grant

In order to improve the compatibility of research work and family life, part-time grants can be awarded to allow for the care of children and close relatives. Grantees can dedicate their time to research in proportions of between 50 and 100 per cent. In this case, the period of the grant is extended such that the total period of funding covers two full years.
Basic amount of the grant

The Institute management decides on the amount of grants according to the Guidelines. This amount will be based on the grantee's group according to age (German postdoc) or experience (foreign postdoc). The distinctions are as follows:

**GERMAN POSTDOC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>up to age 30</td>
<td>€ 1,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>age 31 - 34</td>
<td>€ 1,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>age 35 - 38</td>
<td>€ 1,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>from age 39</td>
<td>€ 1,621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOREIGN POSTDOC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Postdoctoral scientist after 2 years of scientific work or similar qualification</td>
<td>€ 2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Postdoctoral scientist after 5 years of scientific work, after first scientific publication</td>
<td>€ 2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Scientist with minimum status of an Assistant Prof. or Associate Prof. or showing evidence of comparable outstanding scientific achievement and international recognition</td>
<td>€ 3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grant rates are selected such that from the point of view of the Max Planck Society the grant is exempt from tax and social security contributions are not required.

Social insurance such as health insurance does not form part of the grant. For this reason, grantees must submit evidence that they have sufficient health insurance when accepting the grant. For full details, see the "Information Sheet for Grantees" which is available from the personnel department of your institute.

**Health insurance allowance**

It is possible to receive a health insurance allowance of 50 per cent of health insurance contributions, though this is limited to a maximum of 100 euros. The requirement for this is a written application and proof of either statutory health insurance or private health insurance having at least the same range of benefits as the statutory health insurance (standard rate or full rate).
Moreover, an additional allowance of 50 per cent or max. 100 euros can be paid for each family member traveling with the grantee who does not have their own income.

3. FAMILY ALLOWANCES for German postdocs

Child allowance

A monthly flat-rate child allowance is paid for children up to the age of 18. It is 400 euros for the first child and 100 euros for each additional child.

Children of the grantee's domestic partner can qualify for this if it can be proved to the institute that the children lived in the grantee's household prior to taking on the grant (e.g. proof of residency). If both partners are awarded MPS grants, the child allowance is only awarded once. Funding from other sources such as the German Research Foundation (DFG) must be accounted for in order to avoid duplicate funding.

Child allowance is not included in a grant; it can be applied for at the Federal Employment Agency (Family Benefits Office) responsible for the grantee's place of residence.

Family component

Grantees with children can claim a grant extension or/and a childcare allowance. The aim of this is to make it easier for junior scientists to combine the pursuit of an academic career with having a family, enabling swift project completion.

GRANT EXTENSION

If grant recipients have at least one child in their care under 12 years when they accept the grant (the cut-off date is the child's 12th birthday), they can claim an extension of the grant period of up to 12 months with payment of the full grant rate including all allowances. This also applies if the first child is born during the funding period.

Children of the grantee's domestic partner can qualify for this if it can be proved to the institute that the children lived in the grantee's household prior to taking on the grant (e.g. proof of residency). For additional children born during the funding period, grantees have the possibility of extending the funding period by another three months. In the event of such claims, the regular period of funding has priority, i.e. it must be fully used up before the extension claim can take effect.
CHILDCARE COSTS

As an alternative to grant extension by a maximum of 12 months, it is possible to apply for a childcare allowance equal to the cost of the 12-month extension (money instead of time). The maximum amount available is the relevant basic grant payment for each month of extension not taken.

The conversion of basic monthly payments into childcare costs can be handled flexibly. For example it is possible to take an extension of five months and a childcare allowance for seven months. The combination of the options of grant extension and childcare allowance requires the grantee to make an undertaking to the institute regarding the specific distribution in advance.

Whichever variant is selected, evidence must be provided of the costs of childcare (by submitting invoices and proof of payment).

The following are examples of costs which are eligible to be claimed:
- childcare in nursery schools, day care facilities, day nurseries, crèches
- childcare provided by child minders, babysitters or au pairs
- international schools at the place of residence
- homework supervision

The following costs are not eligible to be claimed:
- teaching materials and tutoring
- special tuition (e.g. music, sports)
- meals
- childcare provided by family members (e.g. grandparents, siblings)

If both partners are awarded MPS grants, the family component is only granted once. Funding from other sources such as the German Research Foundation (DFG) must be accounted for in order to avoid duplicate funding.

4. FAMILY ALLOWANCES for foreign postdocs

Spouse allowance

Married grantees can receive a spouse allowance of up to 260 euros if the spouse accompanies the grantee for at least 3 months. The spouse's income (salary or income, German or foreign grant) that exceeds the income limit for marginal part-time earnings is offset against the spouse allowance. Evidence must be provided of the spouse's income.
5. **CHILDCARE**

Max Planck Society grantees have access to external childcare facilities at most sites. Please consult your MPI for details.

6. **OFFSET OF SECONDARY INCOME**

The grant covers essential living costs. If the grantee receives a secondary income from a third party which exceeds the limit for minimal part-time earnings, the surplus amount is offset against the amount of the grant. The grantee is obliged to notify the Max Planck Society of all secondary income. This also applies to grants awarded by other bodies.

7. **OTHER ALLOWANCES**

**Travel expenses**

If trips are required to carry out research work and the grantee applies to the institute for travel expenses, the institute management makes a decision as to payment of an allowance according to the funding available. The amount of travel expenses paid is based on analogous application of the Federal Travel Expenses Act. Costs can only be reimbursed if evidence of payment is submitted.

Grantees pursuing their scientific project at Max Planck Society institutes and research units abroad can be reimbursed for the cost of travel from and to Germany.

**Overseas allowance**

If the scientific project requires the grantee to spend time in a foreign country, an overseas allowance is paid in addition to the grant. This regulation also applies to grantees conducting their research at Max Planck Society institutes and research units abroad.

**Material costs allowance (for foreign postdocs only)**

Each postdoc grantee may apply for a material costs allowance of up to 123 euros. This allowance is intended for specialist literature, special software and other purchases necessary for the research project which are not available at the institute.
8. INTERRUPTION OF THE GRANT

Accident/illness

In the event of interruption of work on the scientific project due to illness or accident, the grant will continue to be paid out for a period of six weeks. Beyond this period, payment of part of the grant can be approved internally by the institute for a period of no more than six months if this is necessary in order to avoid undue hardship.

Pregnancy

In the event of interruption of work on the scientific project due to pregnancy, payment of the grant will continue in analogous application of §§ 3 and 6 of MuSchG (Maternity Protection Act) for the period in which the recipient is prohibited from working. State benefits will be offset.

Rest and recuperation

If a grant is awarded for at least one year, work on the scientific project can be interrupted for rest and recuperation purposes. In this case, the grant will continue to be paid up to duration of 31 working days per year, up to 34 working days from age 30. Weekdays are counted as all days which are not Sundays or public holidays.

9. ENDING/WITHDRAWAL OF THE GRANT

The grant ends before expiry of the approved period at the end of the day on which the grantee takes on paid professional/commercial work which does not serve the purpose of the grant in terms of its nature and scope. The grantee undertakes to provide notification of commencement of such work in writing in advance.

The grant can be withdrawn prior to the end of the approved period if the grantee does not demonstrate the requisite and reasonable commitment to the purpose of the grant.

II. FUNDING VIA AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

If funding is awarded in the form of an employment contract, the TVöD (Collective Wage Agreement for Government Service Workers) is applied on an individual basis. The duration of employment and the amount of remuneration are set down in writing in the employment contract.
1. REMUNERATION

The personnel department of the institute will provide information on salary classification according to the TVöD. For general information on the TVöD, please consult the website of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. Individual net earnings are obtained by deducting the statutory amounts for taxation and social insurance (health, nursing care, pension and unemployment insurance) from the gross amounts listed in the TVöD.

2. SPECIAL PAYMENTS

A special annual payment is granted according to § 20 of the TVöD. As remuneration for employment, the special payment is also subject to income tax as well as the full rate of health, nursing care, pension and employment insurance.

3. CHILDCARE

Max Planck Society employees have access to external childcare facilities at most sites. Please consult the institute for further details.

4. VACATION

The amount of annual vacation is based on the Collective Wage Agreement for Government Service Workers (TVöD).

5. TRAVEL EXPENSES

If trips are required to carry out the research project and these have been arranged or approved by the institute, travel expenses are reimbursed in analogous application of the Federal Travel Expenses Act.

6. TERMINATION

The first six months of employment are regarded as a probationary period during which the contract can be terminated at two weeks’ notice. After completion of the probationary period, termination is subject to the periods of notice set down in the Collective Agreement.
## POSTDOC FUNDING IN THE MAX PLANCK SOCIETY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Postdocs with TVöD (Collective Wage Agreement for Government Service Workers) contract</strong></th>
<th><strong>Postdocs with grant (German)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Postdocs with grant (foreign)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment contract</strong></td>
<td>No employment contract</td>
<td>No employment contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject to tax and social insurance</td>
<td>not subject to tax and social insurance</td>
<td>not subject to tax and social insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of funding:</strong></td>
<td>Duration of funding:</td>
<td>Duration of funding:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individually determined or subject to the Science and Research Act Governing Fixed-Term Contracts</td>
<td>generally up to 2 years</td>
<td>generally up to 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remuneration:</strong></td>
<td>Basic grant:</td>
<td>Basic grant:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to the TVöD salary table</td>
<td>between € 1,468 and € 1,621</td>
<td>between € 2,100 and € 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special annual payment:</td>
<td>Child allowance:</td>
<td>Spouse allowance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to § 20 TVöD</td>
<td>€ 400 for the 1st child, € 100 for each additional child</td>
<td>up to € 260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family component:</td>
<td>Material expenses allowance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) 12 months' extension or</td>
<td>up to € 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) childcare allowance equal to the amount of the grant for 12 months or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) a combination of a) and b) (at least one child aged under 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health insurance allowance:</td>
<td>Health insurance allowance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 % of costs, but max. € 100 for insurance at the level of public health insurance</td>
<td>50 % of costs, but max. € 100 for insurance at the level of public health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also for family members in justified cases</td>
<td>Also for family members in justified cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part-time option</strong></td>
<td>Partial grant</td>
<td>Partial grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>between 50 and 100 %</td>
<td>between 50 and 100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vacation:</strong></td>
<td>Interruption for rest and recovery:</td>
<td>Interruption for rest and recovery:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entitlement according to TVöD</td>
<td>31 to 34 working days (from age 30) for rest and recovery (in the case of a stay of at least one year)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>