

Guide for Applicants

Niels Bohr Professors 2015

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The DNRF in brief

- The DNRF was established in 1991 as an independent organization with the objective of funding basic research at a high international level
- In 1991, the foundation received an endowment of 2 billion DKK (270 M euro) from Parliament
- The foundation's lifespan was extended in 2008 by capital injection of 3 billion DKK (400 M euro) and another 3 billion was allocated on the 2015 finance bill. This capital injection will ensure the existence of the foundation until 2036
- Since 1991, the DNRF has committed itself to supporting Danish research institutions with 7,3 billion DKK (almost 1 billion euro)
- The DNRF spend approximately 450 M DKK (around 60 M euro) annually
- A total of 100 Centers of Excellence have been established since 1993. The DNRF has also launched a range of other smaller programs

Introduction

This guide provides information to potential applicants who intend to submit a proposal for a Niels Bohr Professorship to the [Danish National Research Foundation \(DNRF\)](#).

The deadline for submitting proposals is **Tuesday, September 1, 2015, by 12 noon.**

Proposals must be written in English using an application form that can be downloaded from www.dg.dk. The application form must be submitted electronically as a PDF document attached to an e-mail sent to dg@dg.dk.

Applicants are advised to visit www.dg.dk for further information about the DNRF, the Niels Bohr Professorship Program, and existing professorships. Furthermore, applicants are urged to contact the secretariat if they have questions about the application process. Questions may be directed to:

Special Adviser Johanne Juhl , E-mail: jj@dg.dk, Tel.: +45 3318 1951 or

Director Thomas Sinkjær, E-mail: ts@dg.dk, Tel.:+45 3318 1950

The Niels Bohr Professorship Program

The program was initiated in 2011 with the distinct purpose of enriching Danish research communities with top-class researchers from abroad. This includes excellent international researchers, but the program is also an opportunity to "call" some of the outstanding Danish researchers who have chosen an academic career abroad home to Denmark

What is a Niels Bohr Professorship?

The Niels Bohr Professorship Program seeks to attract strong, international senior-level researchers who are able to significantly advance Danish research through the internationalization of a specific area of research in Denmark with lasting, long-term effects.

The Niels Bohr professor must have a high standing in the international research community. During the funding period, the Niels Bohr professor is expected to act as a catalyst, supporting a strong scientific cohesiveness, and demonstrate scientific/scholarly leadership of the host research environment in Denmark.

The focus, structure, and size of the proposed Niels Bohr Professorship are such that they set the stage for research ventures that are not feasible within conventional funding from other sources.

The DNRF welcomes proposals for research programs characterized by novelty, creativity and excellence. Professorships can be established within and/or across all research areas: Humanities, Life Sciences, Natural Sciences, Technical Sciences, and Social Sciences.

The Niels Bohr professor may start up a new research group or enter an existing one. It is possible to bring along junior researchers to Denmark. The Niels Bohr professor must engage in research training activities, such as the supervision of Ph.D. students.

Requirements

The proposed Niels Bohr professor can be either Danish or foreign and must be at the level of full professor or equivalent and employed abroad.

The DNRF welcomes proposals in which the Niels Bohr professor stays in Denmark for the entire 5-year funding period. Other models in which the Niels Bohr professor remains in Denmark for shorter or longer visits are also welcome; however, the time spent at the Danish host institution is expected to correspond to 50-100% of a full-time equivalent.

Proposals must be submitted by the researcher responsible for the research group at the Danish university receiving the visiting professor.

The proposal must include a letter of support from the Danish University, signed by the rector or the dean, documenting the university's commitment to the proposal. The letter must also indicate that the proposed Niels Bohr professor and the research group at the Danish University are considered to be international leaders within the research area in question.

Furthermore, the proposal must also include a letter of declaration signed by the proposed Niels Bohr professor. In those cases in which the proposed Niels Bohr professor expects to spend less than full time in Denmark, the letter must include a short description of the organization of the time to be spent at the Danish host institution.

Available funding and eligible costs of the Niels Bohr Professorship

Up to 200 MDKK is reserved for this call, and the DNRF envisions that it will grant 6 to 8 professorships.

Each Niels Bohr Professorship grant is large and very flexible. An estimated budget for the funding period must be enclosed with the proposal.

The grant may cover expenses for the salary of the Niels Bohr professor, Ph.D. students, post-doctoral staff, visiting staff, technical and administrative staff, travel costs and conferences, operational costs and equipment, and overhead (44% for universities).

The specific salary level of the Niels Bohr professor is arranged with the Danish host institution. The Niels Bohr professor may be eligible to a special tax scheme for researchers consisting of a tax rate of 26% plus labor market contribution, a total of 31.92%. You can find more information on the website of the [Danish Customs and Tax Administration \(SKAT\)](#).

Organization of a Niels Bohr Professorship

The Niels Bohr Professorship Program is characterized by a significant degree of flexibility, allowing applicants to freely construct an organizational structure and research plan that supports the objective of the program. The organizational structure must be clear and coherent in terms of optimizing the probability and potential for a strongly internationalized research environment and research area.

Both junior and senior researchers may be affiliated with the Niels Bohr Professorship, and according to the proposed research program, they should share a common idea or vision and an overall and clearly defined set of research objectives.

The Niels Bohr Professorship may build on both new and existing research collaborations while maintaining the work of the Niels Bohr professor as the scientific and organizational focal point. It is important that the Niels Bohr professor exert a strong influence on the surrounding research environments.

Contract negotiation and inauguration

After the board makes its decision (see 'Assessment and Selection' below), the DNRF will begin contract negotiations with the Niels Bohr professor and the Danish host institution regarding co-financing, office and laboratory space, and embedment plans after funding from the DNRF ends.

Please note that in order to begin negotiations, in cases in where the proposed Niels Bohr professor expects to be at the Danish host institution less than full time, a letter from the foreign home institution acknowledging this will be requested.

An official inauguration of each new Niels Bohr Professorship will be held shortly after the newly named professor starts work.

Evaluation and follow-up

The DNRF takes a keen interest in the development of the Niels Bohr Professorships. Through continuous dialogue and follow-up meetings, the DNRF will follow the development of each Niels Bohr Professorship. This set-up provides an opportunity to offer advice or make adjust-

ments underway, as well as an opportunity to learn more about the funding mechanism and how it can best be organized.

Also, joint seminars with all the Niels Bohr professors will be conducted during the 5-year funding period.

In order to systematically collect information on the progress of each grant, the DNRF requests all grant holders to submit a short annual report with information on a number of key indicators, including publications, dissemination of research, outreach activities, educational activities, external relations, and organizational development.

Excellent frontline research – what kind of research is supported?

The term “basic research” is included in the Danish name of the DNRF (Danmarks Grundforskningsfond), signaling that the DNRF supports what may be defined as fundamental research.

Some DNRF grant holders (primarily Centers of Excellence) produce results that are immediately useful, while others pursue pure “blue sky” research. What matters is that the research funded by the DNRF is considered truly novel, highly ambitious and excellent.

The DNRF welcomes outstanding research of a high international caliber that may be described as ambitious, highly creative, original, scientifically daring, and potentially groundbreaking.

Grant holders are expected to engage in pondering some of the large unsolved questions and address the challenges that intrigue them the most. The philosophy is that when excellent people work with problems they are most passionate about, groundbreaking results are likely to follow. In other words, the DNRF welcomes curiosity-driven research – or what might be described as exceptional researchers’ dream projects.

Assessment and Selection

The board's assessment and selection of the proposals for funding involves a two-step procedure.

In October 2015, the board will preselect a number of proposals among those received that merit further assessment. Those not selected will receive a rejection letter. The preselected proposal will be sent to three international (foreign) high-level experts within the relevant research area(s) for external review.

The final decision on funding among those proposals that have been in external review will be made by the board in April 2016. The decision is made on the basis of the content of the proposals, three peer reviews for each proposal, and any comments on the reviews that the applicant may have (see more information below). The quality of the reviews received is generally very high, and the reviews usually provide good advice to the board as well as to the applicants with good advice. However, although the reviews serve as very important input to the board, it is the board that makes the final decision. After the board's final processing of the proposals, applicants will be informed of the outcome.

Submission of proposals

Proposals must be submitted using an application form that can be downloaded from www.dg.dk. The application form should be submitted electronically as a PDF document attached to an e-mail sent to dg@dg.dk no later than **Tuesday, September 1, 2015, by 12 noon**.

Application form

As specified in the application form, the proposal must include:

- Information on applicant (i.e. the scientist responsible for the research group at the Danish university receiving the visiting professor).
- Information on the proposed Niels Bohr professor.
- A short summary (maximum: 4,800 characters incl. spaces) of the research idea and the added value of the proposed research, by addressing the following issues:
 - The international standing of the proposed Niels Bohr professor
 - How will the Niels Bohr Professorship redefine the research in its respective field in terms of new insights and results?
 - How will the Niels Bohr Professorship significantly advance Danish research and the internationalization of a specific area of research in Denmark with lasting, long-term effects?

(This text will also be used as an introduction to the proposal when identifying potential peer reviewers.)

- A presentation of the research program (maximum: 12,000 characters incl. spaces), which may include a description of the proposed research idea, its dimension of novelty and po-

tential for groundbreaking results, and an argument for its scientific/scholarly or investigative relevance.

- An organizational strategy for securing lasting effects from the internationalization of the research environment (maximum: 9,600 characters incl. spaces), which may include:
 - How will a creative and dynamic research environment be established and/or strengthened through the presence of the Niels Bohr professor at the Danish host institution?
 - How will the Niels Bohr professor contribute to the internationalization of the research environment?
 - Which competencies and capacities will be involved?
 - What plans does the Niels Bohr professor have for spending time in Denmark?
- References to the relevant literature (maximum: 4,800 characters incl. spaces).
- A description of the Danish host institution's commitments and visions for the proposed Niels Bohr Professorship (maximum: 4,800 characters incl. spaces), including:
 - Arguments for how the Niels Bohr Professorship will interact with other related activities and plans of the host institution.
 - Plans for securing a permanent position or a committed, long-term affiliation and, thus, a lasting effect of the grant.
- CV of the proposed Niels Bohr professor, including the following:
 - A brief and concise outline of his/her professional career (maximum: 4,800 characters incl. spaces).
 - A list of his/her ten most influential publications.
 - A paragraph summarizing which work has had the greatest importance and impact (maximum: 1,200 characters incl. spaces).
 - An indication of the total number of publications within the following categories: articles, monographs, book chapters, proceedings, and others.
- CVs for each of the participating core members, including the following:
 - A brief and concise outline of his/her professional career (maximum: 2,400 characters incl. spaces per CV).
 - A list of his/her five most influential publications.
 - An indication of the total number of publications within the following categories: articles, monographs, book chapters, proceedings, and others.
- A budget for a five-year period
- Letter of Support
 - A short letter of support signed by the rector or the dean of the Danish university must be enclosed with the application. The letter must include the Danish host institution's commitment to hosting the proposed Niels Bohr Professorship as described in the proposal. The letter must also indicate that the proposed Niels Bohr Professor and the research group at the Danish University are considered to be international leaders within the research area in question
- Letter of Declaration
 - A letter signed by the proposed Niels Bohr professor must be enclosed with the application. If the proposed Niels Bohr professor expects to spend less than full time in

Denmark, the letter must include a short description of the organization of the time to be spent at the Danish host institution.

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria follow three dimensions: research quality and leadership, the organization of the Niels Bohr Professorship, and the added value and spillover effect of the Niels Bohr Professorship.

- Research quality and leadership
 - The Niels Bohr professor has a high standing in the international research community.
 - The Niels Bohr professor acts as a catalyst, supporting scientific cohesiveness, and demonstrates scientific/scholarly leadership.
 - The proposed research program demonstrates novelty, creativity and excellence.
 - The proposed research is ambitious and original and has the potential for breakthroughs in the relevant research field(s).

- Research organization
 - The focus, structure, and size of the proposed Niels Bohr Professorship are such that they set the stage for excellent research.
 - The organizational structure supports the objectives of the program. It must be clear and coherent in terms of optimizing the probability and potential for a strongly internationalized research environment and research area.
 - The proposal displays a careful understanding of the correlation between the organization and the objective of the Niels Bohr Professorship in terms of advancing the internationalization of the research area and environment in question. This also includes the commitment of the host institution in terms of securing a lasting effect of the professorship as well as plans for how much time the Niels Bohr professor will be spending in Denmark (expected to correspond to 50-100% of a full-time equivalent).

- Added value and spillover effect of the Niels Bohr Professorship
 - The presence of a Niels Bohr professor will significantly advance the Danish research environment. It will also influence surrounding research environments.
 - The Niels Bohr Professorship includes high-quality research personnel in order to establish a creative and dynamic international research environment.
 - The Niels Bohr Professorship will provide an inspirational training ground for young researchers from abroad as well as Denmark, including supervision and research training activities.
 - The Niels Bohr Professorship will have lasting, long-term effect on the Danish research group(s) involved.

The peer review process

The proposals selected by the board to merit further assessment will be sent to three international (foreign) high-level experts within the relevant research area(s) for external review. The reviewers should possess at least the same international standing as the proposed Niels Bohr professor. Each reviewer is asked to deliver a report of three to five pages addressing a number of questions stated in the Terms of Reference that can be found at www.dg.dk. Each reviewer is asked to review only one proposal.

Before the DNRF sends the proposals to the reviewers, both reviewers and applicants are asked to inform the secretariat about any possible conflicts of interest. If such a conflict is identified, the reviewer will not take part in the evaluation, and an alternative reviewer will be invited.

Each applicant will be asked to submit the names of three potential experts, one of whom will be chosen by the DNRF to serve as one of the three reviewers. The DNRF will select the other two reviewers based on recommendations from external or internal sources. The DNRF has chosen this process in order to ensure that the composition of the three-member review team encompasses the scientific scope of the proposal.

The DNRF uses an open and transparent process in its evaluation process. The peer review reports will not be anonymous, and reviewers and applicants will know each other's identities. Applicants are given an opportunity to comment on the composition of the three reviewers and may, in addition, comment on the reviews prior to the board's decision.

Time frame

Proposals must be submitted electronically to dg@dg.dk. The DNRF must receive proposals no later than **Tuesday, September 1, 2015, by 12 noon**. An application form can be downloaded from www.dg.dk.

The board will preselect proposals that merit further assessment in October 2015. Written peer reviews will take place from November 2015 to February 2016. The board will process the pre-selected proposals that have been in external review and make its decision in April 2016, after which the DNRF will initiate contract negotiations with the successful applicants.

The Niels Bohr Professorships may start operating in the summer/early fall of 2016.