Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD)

PhD Training Fellowships for Women Scientists from Science and Technology Lagging Countries

Call for Applications

The Fellowship is offered to women scientists from **Science and Technology Lagging Countries (STLCs)** to undertake PhD research in the Natural, Engineering and Information Technology sciences at a host institute in the South.

Please note that the OWSD PhD Fellowships applications are collected through an online system only, hosted by TWAS online forms.

IMPORTANT
Please find here below all the information you need to prepare your application. Please read it carefully and make sure you prepare all the documents you will have to upload when the application system is online.

The official language for the application is English.

Purpose

The programme is administered with funds generously provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and is offered in partnership with host institutes throughout the developing world.

The general purpose of the fellowship programme is to contribute to the emergence of a new generation of women leaders in science and technology, and to promote their effective participation in the scientific and technological development of their countries.

The specific aims of the fellowship programme are:

- To improve access to educational and training opportunities in science and technology for young and talented women graduates from STLCs.
- To increase the scientific productivity and creativity of women scientists in STLCs.
- To empower a new generation of talented women to assume a leadership role in science and technology.
- To encourage women scientists to contribute to the sustainable development of their home countries.
- To enable women scientist from the South to collaborate and network on a regional and international level.

Fellowship support

Candidates can choose between two study schemes:

- a **full-time** fellowship (maximum 4 years funding), where the research is undertaken entirely at a host institute in another developing country in the South.
- a **sandwich** fellowship, where the candidate must be a registered PhD student in her home country and undertakes part of her studies at a host institute in another developing country. The sandwich fellowship is awarded for a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 research visits at the host institute. The minimum duration of the first visit is 6 months. The total number of months spent at the host institute cannot exceed 20 months. The funding period cannot exceed 4 years.
  OWSD particularly encourages candidates to consider the sandwich option, which allows them to earn the PhD in their home country while accessing specialist researchers and equipment abroad, at the host institute.

The fellowship support is only provided while the student is on site, at the host institute.

The OWSD fellowship covers:

- A monthly allowance to cover basic living expenses such as accommodation and meals while in the host country
- A special allowance to attend international conferences during the period of the fellowship
- A return ticket from the home country to the host institute for the agreed research period
- Visa expenses
- Annual medical insurance contribution
- The opportunity to attend regional science communications workshops, on a competitive basis
- Study fees (including tuition and registration fees) in agreement with the chosen host institute which is also expected to contribute

The OWSD fellowship does not cover:

- Bench fees and consumables
- Support for language training, either before or during the fellowship programme
- Support for shipment of research samples
- Costs for personal computer or software purchase
- Support for family members
- Additional return tickets to the home country for personal reasons

Eligibility

1. Candidates must confirm that they intend to **return to their home country** as soon as possible after completion of the fellowship.

2. **Eligible countries**
The list of eligible countries is available **here**.

3. **Eligible scientific fields**

- Agricultural Sciences
- Astronomy, Space and Earth Sciences
- Biological Systems and Organisms
- Chemical Sciences
- Computing and Information Technology
- Engineering Sciences
- Mathematical Sciences
- Medical and Health Sciences
- Neurosciences
- Physics
- Structural, Cell and Molecular Biology

4. **Eligible academic qualification**

The minimum qualification is an **MSc degree** in one of the above listed study fields.

5. **Eligible host institutes**

- Host institutes must be located in a **developing country in the South** (not the candidate's home country).
- A list of recommended institutes is available **here**.
- Other institutes, not included in the link above, will also be considered if they demonstrate appropriate resources and expertise.
- Candidates should identify a host institute outside their home country. They can identify a further two host institutes if desired.
- Candidates who are already on site in the host country will not usually be considered eligible.

Required documents for application

The official application language is English and therefore all application content generated must be in English. If you are submitting supporting documents (such as degree certificate, acceptance letter or no objection certificate, etc.) in a different language, you must attach at least an informal translation into English and upload it along with the scanned original at the appropriate point in the online application form. Documents without any English translation will not be considered.

We strongly encourage eligible applicants to start gathering all requested documentation as soon as possible; sometimes it takes weeks to receive all relevant letters.

1. **PhD research proposal outline**

- Candidates must submit a PhD research proposal outline (max 2.000 words), which should be a summarized description of the PhD research proposal.
- Guidelines for writing a good research proposal outline are available **here**.
- Candidates are invited to study carefully these guidelines and ensure that their proposal is well structured and clear. The project proposal is given particular attention at selection.

2. **Degree certificates and transcripts**

Candidates must submit copies of:

a. all university degree certificates; and
b. all university-issued transcripts, indicating all courses and grades.

3. **Curriculum Vitae**

Candidates must submit their complete CV (including a list of publications, if available).

4. **Preliminary acceptance letter**

Candidates must submit a preliminary acceptance letter from at least one host institute.

- The letter must be signed by the head of department or by the postgraduate studies coordinator.
- The study starting date on the preliminary acceptance letter must be the year following the application (e.g. if you apply for a fellowship in 2017 the acceptance letter should indicate the starting date as 2018).
- The sample available **here** must be used for the preparation of this document.

5. **Letter of commitment**

Candidates must submit a letter of commitment from the prospective host supervisor confirming that the host institute has the resources (e.g. bench fees, laboratory equipment) required to undertake the project.

- The letter should also describe why the host institute is appropriate for the subject of study and confirm the supervisor's interest in working with the candidate.
- Guidelines for letter drafting are available **here**.

6. **Reference letters**

Candidates must submit two reference letters from senior scientists familiar with their work.

- Guidelines for reference letter drafting are available **here**.
- For SANDWICH candidates only: please note that the home PhD supervisor cannot be one of the two referees.

7. **Passport**

Candidates must submit a scanned copy of the passport page, which contains personal details (photo, document number etc.).

Candidates applying for a SANDWICH study scheme must, in addition, submit also the following documents:

8. **Registration and No objection certificate**

- Sandwich candidates must submit the Registration and No objection certificate prepared by the home institute confirming that the candidate is a PhD registered student and that there is no objection to her studying at the chosen host institute abroad.
- The certificate template can be downloaded **here** and must be completed and signed by the head/director of the home institute.

9. **Supporting statement from home supervisor**

Sandwich candidates must submit a supporting statement, prepared and signed by the home supervisor on letter-headed paper. The supervisor should:

a. state that he/she is willing to support the candidate undertaking part of her studies at the host institute abroad; and
b. describe how the research visit abroad will impact/benefit the candidate's research project.

The online application system will only accept applications complete in all parts, including the required documents. All documents must be uploaded through the online application system. Do not email any document to OWSD unless requested.

The OWSD Secretariat reserves the right to judge an application ineligible if the answers and/or documentation do not correspond to the specific question asked (e.g. blank documents, false certificates, outdated reference letters).

Selection

The fellowships are highly competitive and selection is based on scientific competence and merit. The candidate's project proposal is given particular attention.

The applications will be reviewed by a panel of eminent scientists, appointed and chaired by OWSD.

The Selection Committee's decision is final and without appeal. It cannot be contested or subject to explanation or justification.

If selected for an OWSD fellowship, kindly note that OWSD must be informed by the awardee of additional/supplementary grants, funds and bursaries that have been awarded in connection with her PhD research programme, specifying the donor, amount, duration and purpose of the grant (which costs are meant to be covered). Any breach of this rule could lead OWSD to cancel the fellowship. If the awardee is recipient of a significant grant, OWSD may decide to reduce the fellowship support accordingly.

Downloadable on the OWSD website:

CHECK LIST_FULL TIME study scheme
CHECK LIST_SANDWICH study scheme