

Guidelines for Industrial Postdoc

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1. What is an Industrial Postdoc?

An Industrial Postdoc is an industrially focused research project of one to three years carried out in a company by a researcher who has obtained a PhD degree within the past five years. The project has a clear focus on the business development of the company, and a research level that requires a person with PhD competences to carry it out.

The Industrial Postdoc is employed full-time by the company, and the project is conducted in collaboration with a public sector research institution. The Industrial Postdoc divides his/her working time between the company and the research institution in a way that fits the project. The company and the research institution both assign a mentor to the Industrial Postdoc.

Combined, Industrial PhD and Industrial Postdoc comprise Innovation Fund Denmark's Industrial Researcher Programme and contribute to the Fund's overall purpose of creating growth and employment in Denmark. The Industrial Researcher Programme has the following specific purposes:

- To educate and develop researcher talents into industrial researchers
- To contribute to business-oriented innovation and development in Denmark
- To strengthen the collaboration between Danish companies and universities at home and abroad

The Industrial Postdoc programme is aimed at candidates who have not been employed in the private sector to any great extent since the start of their PhD study.

The Fund finances part of the Industrial Postdoc's salary and travel expenses as well as the research institution's expenses for the mentor, equipment and other project related expenses.

2. Who can apply?

An Industrial Postdoc project is a collaboration which includes a company, a research institution and an Industrial Postdoc. The following formal requirements apply to the parties:

As an Industrial Postdoc candidate you must:

- Have obtained a PhD degree within the past five years prior to the application deadline (max. five years from the PhD diploma date, excl. parental leave)
 - It is possible to apply without having submitted the PhD thesis if the application includes a statement from the main PhD supervisor that submission and a successful defence are expected within six months of the application deadline
- Be able to document significant scientific capacity within the project field in the form of publications, research-based patents or similar
- Have been employed or self-employed for max. six months in the private sector since the start of the PhD study

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The company must:

- Have a division geographically located in Denmark where the candidate is to be employed
- Be able to provide facilities and financial support for the project for its entire duration
- Be financially independent of the research institution
- Assign a company mentor to the project
- Be part of the private sector
 - To be part of the private sector, the company must:
 1. Be neither a state, regional or municipal authority nor a professional body for public organisations
 2. Have public funding make up no more than half its revenue (including payments from citizens as imposed by law)

If you are in doubt whether an organisation is part of the private sector, you can ask the Fund to assess the organisation by sending its articles of association and the latest annual financial report to erhvervsforsker@innofond.dk.

The company must appoint a mentor. The mentor is the project's formal company representative and works together with the Industrial Postdoc and the research mentor on carrying out the project. The company mentor is responsible for industry-related feedback to the Industrial Postdoc. It is possible to assign co-mentors and third parties.

As a company mentor you must:

- Have general experience with the project subject (research experience is not required)
- Have extensive business sector knowledge

The company mentor is not formally required to have research experience. However, the company mentor and the research mentor must together have sufficient research competences to provide qualified professional project feedback to the Industrial Postdoc.

The company mentor does not have to be employed by the company, but must work in the private sector on a daily basis.

The research institution must:

- Be able to document significant research activity within the project field
- Assign a research mentor to the project
- Be part of the public sector
 - To be part of the public sector, the research institution must:
 1. Be either a state, regional or municipal authority or a professional body for public organisations, or
 2. Have public funding make up more than half its revenue (including payments from citizens as imposed by law)

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The research institution can be located in Denmark or abroad. The institution must appoint a mentor who works together with the Industrial Postdoc and the company on carrying out the project. The research mentor is responsible for research related feedback to the Industrial Postdoc.

As a research mentor you must:

- Be an acknowledged researcher within the project field
- Work in a research environment within the project field on a daily basis

2.1. Several companies in one Industrial Postdoc project and third parties

It is possible for several companies to work together on an Industrial Postdoc project. It will be assessed if the companies combined have the financial means to run the project. One of the companies must be the designated co-ordinator and accordingly be the official applicant, employ the Industrial Postdoc, pay out salary and receive subsidies from the Fund.

3. What is financed?

Innovation Fund Denmark will finance part of the company's expenses for the Industrial Postdoc's salary and travel activities plus the research institution's expenses for mentoring, equipment and other expenses for the Industrial Postdoc project.

3.1. Subsidy to the company

Innovation Fund Denmark will finance up to DKK 22,000 per month of the Industrial Postdoc's salary during the project period, but no more than 50 pct. of the gross salary (gross salary equals salary plus pension contributions).

For each month of the project period, the company also has DKK 2,500 at disposal for the Industrial Postdoc's travels (project relevant conferences at home and abroad, and stays at non-Danish research institutions and companies). This includes a single round trip to the destination, visa, travelling insurance, lodging and university fees. Food, daily/local transportation, books etc. are not covered. This subsidy can be used freely during the entire project period and are not bound to any single month.

The company must pay all other expenses for the project, including equipment, materials and data collection. This also includes the Industrial Postdoc's personal equipment, e.g. laptop, mobile phone, etc.

In case of additional public financing for the company, please note that no more than 50 pct. of a company's overall expenses for an Industrial Postdoc project may be financed by public means. Read more in appendix 1.

3.2. Subsidy to the research institution

For each month of the project period, the Fund will finance up to DKK 12,500 of the research institution's expenses for:

- Time used by the mentor on providing feedback to the Industrial Postdoc
- Equipment, materials and apparatus for the project

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- Time used by researchers, technicians and other assistant personnel on the project
- Other expenses for carrying out the project, though not subcontractors

This subsidy can be used freely during the entire project period and is not bound to any single month.

When applying, you must attach a budget for the use of this subsidy. The Industrial Researcher Committee, which assesses the application, will also assess if the budget is reasonable and relevant to the project, and may adjust the budget if individual items and related expenses have not been adequately explained. Unused subsidies are returned to the Fund at project end.

4. How to apply

In the application to Innovation Fund Denmark you must describe the Industrial Postdoc project and the participating people and organisations.

The application must include a high quality project description that describes the research project and the project participants. The template for the project description includes instructions on the contents of the individual sections and is available at www.erhvervpostdoc.dk.

The project can be within any research field, as long as the project's research quality and the direct or indirect short or long term business potential and effect can be argued convincingly.

The application deadlines are continuously determined and announced at www.erhvervsforsker.dk. The Fund must receive the application before 12 noon on the closing date unless otherwise indicated on the website. The application and all communication must be in Danish or English, or a combination.

You submit the application to the Fund via www.e-grant.dk. The company mentor must initiate the application in e-grant. The research mentor and the Industrial Postdoc candidate must also register at www.e-grant.dk, and after the application has been generated, the company mentor must add them as participants in the application. This is necessary in order to process the application.

Read more at www.erhvervsforsker.dk on how to submit an application and what information and appendices it must contain. If information is missing or the wrong appendix templates have been used, the Fund may administratively reject the application.

5. How the application is assessed

The application is assessed by the Industrial Researcher Committee, which consists of research and business experts within all main fields of research. The Committee may decide to ask for external assessments where additional research competences are needed for the assessment. The Committee and the external assessors are subject to a duty of confidentiality.

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Applications are processed within two months. The Committee may decide to ask the applicant for additional information for the assessment. If so, processing time may exceed two months.

The Committee makes a recommendation to Innovation Fund Denmark, where the Board makes the final decision.

5.1. Criteria

The application is assessed by these criteria:

- Research quality
- Commercial significance and effect
- Project implementation

Research quality

Generally, the project must be at Postdoc level, and it must be realistic to complete within the project period. The research quality of the project is specifically assessed with regard to:

- The novelty value of the research
- The quality of the description of state-of-the-art within the subject area
- The relevance and level of the theoretical foundation
- The quality of hypotheses/research questions
- The relevance and clarification of selected methods and data basis
- The relevance and expected impact of research publications

Commercial significance and effect

The project must have a clear significance for and effect on the Danish company's business and will be specifically assessed with regard to:

- The results' expected contribution to the company's business foundation and/or revenue
- Plan and probability for implementation and commercial realisation of the results

Project implementation

The application must demonstrate that the project is well-organised, and that the parties are competent and relevant. The following will be specifically assessed:

- The organisation and feasibility of the project (including structure and time schedule, distribution of roles, the Postdoc's time allocation, publication plan)
- That the project involves the Industrial Postdoc in both the company and the research institution, and that the time allocation is appropriate for project implementation
- The quality of the project parties' qualifications

5.2. Decision

An Industrial Postdoc application can be approved, conditionally approved or rejected. An approved Industrial Postdoc project can begin from the date of approval.

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Conditional approval

If a project is conditionally approved, a decision describing the conditions for final approval is added to the case in e-grant when processing is done. Documentation for meeting the conditions is submitted to the Fund via e-grant. If the Fund finds that the conditions have been met, the project can begin. The conditions must be met within six months of the decision.

Rejection

If a project is rejected, a rejection stating the reasons for rejection is added to the case in e-grant when processing is done. It is possible to reapply at the next application deadline. When reapplying, you must clearly describe how the reasons for rejection have been addressed. All application material, incl. new signatures, must be resubmitted when reapplying.

The Fund will make public the title, abstract and participants of approved and conditionally approved applications at www.innovationsfonden.dk. Accordingly, applicants should make sure that the title and abstract do not contain any confidential information.

6. The Industrial Postdoc's terms of employment

6.1. Employment

In an Industrial Postdoc project, the company hires the Industrial Postdoc who is thus subject to terms that apply to private employment. The Industrial Postdoc is hired on a full-time basis for the project. The Industrial Postdoc's work tasks and time must be allocated primarily to the Industrial Postdoc project and can be used on related activities only to a limited extent. Also, the Industrial Postdoc's time must be divided between the company and the research institution in a way that fits the project while involving the Industrial Postdoc in both working environments.

As a minimum, the employment must be on ordinary terms for salaried employees. Other terms follow any collective or individual agreements. Any non-competition clauses or similar in the employment contract must not limit possibilities for employment elsewhere.

6.2. Salary

The Industrial Postdoc's gross salary (the sum of salary and pension) must as a minimum correspond to the gross salary of the collective agreement for Postdocs employed by the Danish state. The salary levels can be found at www.erhvervspostdoc.dk. Questions about specific salary levels can be made to labour unions.

6.3. IPR and publication

The Industrial Postdoc is subject to the provisions of the Danish act on employee inventions while mentors at universities and other public research institutions are subject to the provisions of the Danish act on inventions at public research institutions.

IPR is especially relevant for the Industrial Postdoc's publications in connection with the project. The Industrial Postdoc programme does not regulate agreements on IPR and publishing. Any questions about intellectual property rights and publication should be resolved internally in the project before the employment contract is signed.

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6.4. Leave

The Industrial Postdoc may request that the Fund approves a leave of absence. The Fund must approve the request before the leave can commence. The Fund does not provide subsidies during periods of leave, incl. paternal and sick leave. If the company receives reimbursement from another public authority due to the Industrial Postdoc's long term illness, it must apply for leave from the Industrial Postdoc project. The application is submitted via e-grant.

7. Administration of an approved project in e-grant

If the project is approved, the Fund will create a grant case at www.e-grant.dk which you also used to submit the application. You submit accounts, reports and other written documents to the Fund via e-grant, depending on your obligations in the project. You also request project changes and write to the Fund via e-grant.

7.1. Payments and project end

85 pct. of the total subsidy for the company and the research institution is paid in advance. The company receives subsidy via the NemKonto (Easy Account) assigned to the company's CVR No. (company registration number).

The company and the research institution receive the last part of the total subsidy at project end when the Fund receives:

- Final financial project reports from both organisations
- An audit statement on the company's final financial project report
- The final evaluation of the project

The final financial project reports must show subsidy usage during the project. The Fund will then settle with both organisations. Please note that this means that the company and the research institution at project end may have to repay some of the advance subsidy payment from the Fund.

For projects approved as per application between 1 April 2014 and 20 January 2017, company subsidies are paid in arrears based on the financial project reports which the company must submit at least once a year. The company may, however, choose to submit reports every six months. If the company has less than 20 employees, the reports can be submitted every three months.

The final evaluation is a form that evaluates the project with regard to effects, results and process. The evaluation form must be filled out by all project parties before the Fund can make the last payment to the company and the research institution.

The Fund is not receive any other academic reporting during the project.

7.2. Duty to disclose all material facts and approval of changes

The company and the research institution must inform the Fund immediately if there are any material changes in the foundation for payment of subsidies. This includes e.g. mentor changes, leave of absence, major disruptions or delays, or significant scientific changes. Significant scientific changes are changes of a magnitude that mean the project cannot be immediately recognised as the project originally approved.

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The project can only continue if and when the Fund approves the changes. If the duty to disclose all material facts is not upheld, the Fund may decide to cancel the subsidies and require repayment of any paid out subsidies.

The change request is submitted via e-grant.

Appendix 1: Legislative and regulatory framework

RRI and the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

Innovation Fund Denmark emphasises Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) which aims to strengthen the connection between research and innovation processes and results and the values and needs of society. The Fund promotes RRI in its overall strategies and via projects, and the Fund adheres to the EU Commission's definition and implementation of RRI.

The Fund also supports the principles described in the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. The Fund expects that the projects it invests in adhere to the guidelines of RRI and the code of conduct. The code can be read here: [The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)

Open Access

Innovation Fund Denmark has accepted the regulations in the 'Open Access policy for public research councils and foundations'. This means that publicised scientific articles that are the result of complete or partial funding from the Fund must be made publicly available for everyone via Open Access, if so permitted by the journal.

The full policy is available at: [Open Access policy for public research councils and foundations](#)

Legislative framework and transparency

Industrial PhD is authorised by the Danish Act No. 306 of 29 March 2014 on Innovation Fund Denmark.

Applicants should be aware that information may be passed on to other parties if they apply for right of access in accordance with the Danish Act on Public Information (in Danish: offentlighedsloven). Right of access may e.g. be given in the form of lists of the people who have applied, and for what (applicant names, application titles and amounts applied for). With regard to the applications themselves, the Fund will – in close dialogue with the applicant (incl. companies etc.) - ensure that business sensitive information is not passed on nor any other information which cannot be passed on according to the law.

Co-financing and EU requirements

The Industrial Postdoc programme is administered in accordance with article 25 of the European Commission's General Block Exemption Regulation. This means that up to 50 pct. of a company's total expenses (called the 'eligible costs' by the Commission) for an Industrial Postdoc project may be financed by public means.

'Eligible costs' are expenses for personnel, equipment, buildings, materials, purchased knowledge, consulting advice and other operating costs incurred directly as a result of the research activity, cf. detailed definition in article 25 (3) of the Commission's General Block Exemption Regulation (see next appendix).

Thus, if the Fund's subsidies make up less than 50 pct. of these costs, it is possible for other public authorities to provide further subsidy as long as the 50 pct. limit is not exceeded.

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The Fund can subsidise an Industrial Postdoc project which is a subproject of other publicly subsidised research projects, as long as the total public subsidies for the company's eligible costs for the Industrial Postdoc project do not exceed the 50 pct. limit.

In case of additional public co-financing, there must be a documentable financial boundary between the Industrial Postdoc project and other activities receiving public subsidies, in order that the company's auditor can certify that the co-financing limit of 50 pct. is not exceeded. There are no limits on private co-financing of Industrial Postdoc projects in the private or public sectors.

Appendix 2: The European Commission's definition of 'eligible costs'

– with regard to public co-financing of Industrial PhD projects in companies

COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No. 651/2014

of 17 June 2014

declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in accordance with articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (General Block Exemption Regulation)

Article 25

Aid for research and development projects

3. The eligible costs for research and development projects must fall within a specific category of research and development and include:
 - a) Personnel costs: researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent that they are working on the research project
 - b) Costs of instruments and equipment to the extent and for the period it/they are used for the research project. If such instruments and equipment are not used for their full life for the research project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the research project, as calculated on the basis of good accounting practice, shall be considered eligible
 - c) Costs for buildings and land, to the extent and for the duration it/they are used for the research project. With respect to buildings, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the research project, as calculated on the basis of good accounting practice, shall be considered eligible. For land, the costs of commercial transfer or actually incurred capital costs shall be eligible
 - d) The cost of contractual research, technical knowledge and patents bought or licensed from external sources, where the transaction has been carried out at arm's length as well as costs of consultancy and equivalent services used exclusively for the project
 - e) Additional overheads and other operating expenses, including costs of materials, supplies and similar products, incurred directly as a result of the project

Source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0651&from=EN>