

Jerome Lejeune Foundation
POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS APPLICATION GUIDELINES
“Hypotonia in Down syndrome”

13 pages

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I. Introduction

The Jerome Lejeune Foundation is dedicated to research on genetic diseases with intellectual disability (Down syndrome, Fragile X, etc.). The Foundation funds researchers' teams working all around the world on that topic and organizes scientific events.

The Jerome Lejeune Foundation focuses its efforts to fund for academic research dedicated to bettering our understanding on **Down syndrome**. Explanation provided could help Down syndrome development during infancy, childhood and aging.

This process is built in accordance to the European Charter referenced on the following link: <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>

Since 2017, the Jerome Lejeune Foundation and Sisley-d'Ornano Foundation Research Fund has already offered many Post-Doctoral Fellowships each year to outstanding researchers.

This new award on **Hypotonia in Down syndrome** is now for project(s) to begin end of 2021 or early 2022. [It is in addition to the award on **Down syndrome and cross-pathologies** and in addition to the award on **Genes interaction linked to Down syndrome cognition**].

Each grant per fellowship can be up to one hundred and thirty thousand EUR (€130,000) at most, and for duration of **twenty-four (24) month period**. To that end, the Jerome Lejeune Foundation implements the call for application addressed to the research institutions and willing to host Post-Doctoral Fellowship candidates.

In some exceptional cases, for some particular countries, some negotiations could occur to adapt the budget in accordance to locally paid amount for young postdoctoral employees within a country (In particular for Switzerland and some states in the United States. Local justifications needed.). This will occur following a-head discussion and with valid proofs linked to the location and carrier history of the candidate, this amount could potentially be slightly adjusted through the application of a correction coefficient based on the country in which you have been recruited. A formal local approval from the Jerome Lejeune administrative board will be needed. Note that each adjustment applies to the whole country in question, even if the cost of living may differ between cities or regions within that country. If no agreement could be finalized **before mid-June 2021**, the following one candidate on the list will be selected.

The call, administratively managed by Jerome Lejeune Foundation will be implemented as detailed in the Section "Timeline & Application Process". It is the Institution's remit to identify the best possible candidates to participate in the Post-Doctoral Fellowships campaign.

Candidates will subsequently be expected to submit an application presenting in English their research project, to be carried out in the host institution that nominated them. The Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund Scientific Board composed of renowned international academic experts and Jerome Lejeune Foundation executives oversees the applicant selection process.

It validates the eligibility and selection criteria as well as the tools used to process the call for applications.

If during the first semester 2021 the annual budget of the Jerome Lejeune Foundation allows the funding for additional Post-Doctoral Fellowships (starting end of 2021 for a project to begin in second semester 2022), the No.2 project and maybe even No.3 project in the top list could possibly be funded in addition by the Jerome Lejeune Foundation exclusively or by additional sponsor.

II. Research topics supported

The research project must fall within the scope decided by the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund, that is to say:

To fund science dedicated to developing a better understanding of the hypotonia occurring on Down syndrome population and particularly at birth or during childhood or teenager periods: “Explanation on central or peripheral origin in particular or common cause”.

IMPORTANT: The adequacy of the project linked to the Down syndrome population is mandatory. The project of the candidate should present a potential benefit for the Down syndrome population, even long term benefit.

1. Basic research for better understanding the pathological mechanism and ideally further linked to therapeutic application.
2. Translational research (with application on animal or cells DS models).

Caution: Only research projects focusing on the above topics will be considered for funding.

This process is built in accordance to the European Charter referenced on the following link: <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>

III Timeline & Application process

Institutions (Global institution/Research unit) are invited to submit their applications **between 15 December, 2020 and 19 February, 2021.**

A clear choice has to be done by submitting through the right concerned application (Three different and independent awards are available in 2021: *“Down syndrome and cross-pathologies”*; *“Genes interaction linked to Down syndrome cognition”*; *“Hypotonia in Down syndrome”*).

Deadline for submitting complete application to postdoctoralsisleyjeune@fondationlejeune.org : midnight 19 February, 2021

Possible questions to candidate from the members of the jury: **March and April 2021**

Public engagement interview for short list candidates, if necessary: **around the end of April 2021**

Results announcements: May 2021

CAUTION:

- An identical project cannot be submitted to different applications.
- A candidate should submit only once.

IV Eligibility criteria

4.1 Host Institution

The Jerome Lejeune Foundation Post-doctoral fund partners with academic institutions or academic Research Units describe as “Institutions”.

- Host institutions must give an agreement before submission to participate to this project; it will be through bank transfers as described below, following contract signatures. The second, third and fourth bank transfers will be linked to financial and scientific report update of the ongoing work.
- Institutions should be eligible for funding, based on the decision of the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund Advisory Board. Ideally the research for those post-doctoral grants will be alternately located in France and then one outside France, but the value of the project is predominant.
- The foundation will not be responsible for any reason for the material or immaterial results obtained, or the quality or durability of products or services obtained by the post-doctoral selected candidate or those working in this project.

4.2 Potential Candidate

Only candidates without an actual permanent long-term academic position are eligible (confirmation to be provided in the application).

- The candidates should have presented their doctoral evaluation (PhD) no more than 20 years ago; the goal is to help young researchers.
- The candidates should be presented by institutions/Research Units, but a past, present or planned international mobility is mandatory.
- The application must be submitted in English, on time, through “pdf” **and** “word” format online, complete and in only one document. It must respect the template structure provided and the page limit (3 pages maximum + additional documents in Appendix -CV, Motivation letters...- (total appendices should be max. 6 pages).
- The research topic must fall in the scope of the eligible thematic focus as listed above (out of scope applications will not be reviewed or will be down grading evaluated!). The link and benefit to Down syndrome has to be clearly explicated (approximately 10 lines).
- The candidate must put forward a free standing independent research project involving full-time work for the duration of the fellowship (*with an exceptional acceptance of up to 20% time dedicated to teaching and public outreach*).
- The candidate must present an official letter with his/her project showing his/her motivation and why he/she applies to the call opened by the Jerome Lejeune Foundation
- Proposed projects must address academic research and not “Research & Development” linked to commercial development. Programs are considered R&D when they pursue an objective of systematic application of knowledge or understanding, directed towards the production of useful

materials, devices, and systems or methods, including design, development, and improvement of prototypes and new processes to meet specific requirements. Specific technology developments, as well as clinical trials are not included in this project, but this could be a prelude to future clinical trial development. As such, translational research is eligible as it could be the prelude to future clinical trial development.

- Projects' research shall not (and this is not limitative):
 - violate local (i.e. local means research location) and national regulations, and French regulations.
 - have direct military use;
 - have potentially dangerous environmental impacts;
 - rely on the artificial production of highly infectious pathogens with potential for large scale harmful/lethal effects for humans and research involving gain of function;
 - Deal with:
 - (i) Biomedical research conducted without the fully informed consent of the concerned parties, including genetic information;
 - (ii) Research on human embryonic or fetus stem cells from abortion (Particularly in those situations the non-abortion origin has to be proven by the provider before use.);
- No funds provided by this fund will, in any way, be used to purchase or make use of human embryonic or fetal tissues or another biological material obtained through direct abortions, in vitro fertilization or human cloning or to create new human germinal cells;
- The results of the Research Project will not be published in the same article as the results of work carried out on human embryonic or fetal cells or tissue. The Jerome Lejeune Foundation does not agree to be associated with such a work;
- The researchers should mandatory follow their academic and national **Good Laboratory Practices (GLP)** (i.e.: all measures that ensure, during the all research, quality, traceability and integrity of the data.).

V Evaluation criteria

A Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund peer review evaluation process has been carefully designed to assess scientific excellence irrespective of the gender and nationality of the Post-Doctoral Fellow or any other potential biases, except other mentioned provided in this document.

The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness and impartiality in the treatment of proposals. Confidentiality of data provided will be signed by all reviewers and will not have to be transmitted to other members of their team. The evaluation criteria are at the core of the scientific assessment process. When designing and writing their applications, candidates are strongly urged to keep these criteria in mind to make sure that their research proposals provide all the information required to allow reviewers to reach an informed opinion on each of the criterion. Research proposals will be assessed against the four evaluation criteria below. Each criterion has equal weight and will be marked on a scale of five as follows:

5.1 Jury members

A specific scientific board (one specific independent jury by postdoctoral application) has been built to evaluate the application and will be set up as follow and at the best:

It will be built ideally as follows:

- Two to Three (3) members of the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Scientific Advisory Board (not part of the Institute Jerome Lejeune) having no conflict of interest with the candidates. The President of this Scientific Board could be one of those three design members. If he has a conflict of interest, he will, with the help of the Scientific Committee, design a delegate, another member of the scientific advisory board, to replace him.
- Two to three additional members will be part of the jury for the candidate selection

Those members will confirm the validity of the application (respect of the administrative and scientific topics).

Each of those 4 to 6 members will have equal power on the selection of the validated dossiers. In case of equality the President of the Scientific Committee or his delegate will have a deciding vote. They will work on the environment where the project will take place, and the feasibility of the project (tasks, schedule and budget coherence).

Those four to six members will preselect the finalists.

In addition, a public engagement will be evaluated at the end.

The final candidate will have ideally, during a face-to-face meeting, to demonstrate capacities for interactions with a non-academic audience (interviews with media, presentations in conferences with a broad public etc.).

Those members will ideally follow the scientific choice if communication skills of the finalist are adequate.

5.2 Score Wording Definition

The review evaluation process has been carefully designed to assess scientific excellence irrespective of the gender and nationality of the Postdoctoral Fellow or any other potential biases. The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

The evaluation criteria are at the core of the scientific assessment process. When designing and writing their applications, candidates are strongly urged to keep these criteria in mind to make sure that their research proposals provide all the information required to allow reviewers to reach an informed opinion on each of the criterion.

Research proposals will be assessed against the four evaluation criteria below. Each criterion has equal weight and will be marked on a scale of five as follows:

5	Excellent	All relevant aspects of the assessment criteria successfully addressed. Any shortcomings are minor
4	Very good	Assessment criteria very well addressed/met, although certain improvements are still possible
3	Good	Assessment criteria well addressed/met, although improvements would be necessary
2	Fair	Assessment criteria broadly addressed, however there are significant weaknesses
1	Poor	Assessment criteria addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses
0		The assessment criteria are not addressed or the dossier is out of scope of the defined subject or very weakly related to Down syndrome

5.2.1 Scientific excellence and inventiveness

- Definition and structuration of the scientific case: is the scientific case well-presented and argued? Are objectives clearly defined?
- Progress beyond the state of the art: based on a commanding knowledge of relevant literature, does the research project have the potential to create new knowledge? How will the project fill a knowledge gap in its research field?
- Innovative nature of the concept proposed: originality of the proposed question; use of novel technologies and methodologies; innovative applications of existing methodologies and technologies in new areas.

5.2.2 Quality of the research environment & feasibility

- Work plan and planning: Is the project work plan well-structured and presented? Are deliverables/output/expected results well defined? Are ambitions likely to be achieved within the project's timeframe?
- Appropriateness of the methodology: Is the intended methodology adequate? Is the use of infrastructure and specific equipment well addressed? Has the required preliminary and preparatory work been fulfilled? Are significant risks addressed?
- Host environment and supervisor: Have the host laboratory and the supervisor demonstrated excellence in the proposed topic? Does the host lab possess the means required to implement the work plan?
- Appropriateness of the budget: Is the budget balanced and well justified? Will the funding requested enable the work plan to be realized?

5.2.3 Impact of the research

- Impact of the research on society/communities: How will the research project contribute to better lives and living conditions?

5.2.4 Applicant's profile

- Academic excellence and a proven track record in accordance with the stage of the candidate's career.
- Demonstrated expertise relevant to the research proposed.
- Personal commitment.
- Potential for independence of research.
- Internationally mobility in the past has to be detailed.
- Communication skills as assessed by non-academic experts, and demonstrated through interactions with a non-academic audience (interviews with media, presentations in conferences with a broad public etc.).

VI Selection process

6.1 Application documents

- All information listed below is required to be filled on a Word document you will be request to a specific email address as mentioned hereafter:

postdoctoralsislejeune@fondationlejeune.org

6.2 General information

- Research project details, project title, start and end date, keywords, abstract, relevance of application to main risk, ethical issues. (3 pages max. plus all other documents in appendix (6 pages max.);
- Personal Curriculum vitae (2 pages max) with current affiliation of the applicant and including mandatory information: PhD related information, previous institution, career breaks, international exposure, planned host institution;
- Names, Institutions (Research Unit) and email addresses of 2 referents: referents will be contacted by you in advance to submit their reference letters (letters to be added in appendix, 1 page max. per letter). The applicant's Post-Doctoral advisor writes the first letter and the second letter has to be written by a different referent, preferably the applicant's previous advisor.

6.3 Application Template (Word and PDF format) - 6 pages maximum

- Research project and innovativeness: long term objectives and specific aims; progress beyond the state-of-the-art; innovative nature of the research proposed; proposal bibliographical references (1-page max). Adequacy to the specific thematic;

- Research plan: methodology incl. a description of the materials and methods or experimental strategies; work packages and tasks (1-page max); Specificity to use any animal model; **Ideally the use of two animal models (including the most updated ones on DS will be taken into consideration for the evaluation);**
- Project tasks plan with Budget (1/2-page max);
- Short description of the host laboratory/group with 10 most relevant publications in the past 3 years (1/2-page max);
And in Appendix (6 pages max):
- Short bio of the future supervisor of host institution with main publications (1-page max.);
- Impact of the research (1 page max): contribution to a better understanding of important hazards and risks; impact on society/communities;
- Applicant: Career Statement (1 page max); Detailed CV, incl. participation to colloquia (2 pages max); extended list of the most relevant publications (2 pages max).

6.4 Application step-by-step

- **Step 1** – Institutions/Research Units are invited to appoint a single point of contact (“Operational Contact”) who will handle relations with the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund. Host institutions should indicate their interest in participating in the program.
- **Application:** the candidates are invited to submit their research proposals as described before the fix deadline with the approval of the host institution.
- **Application:** the candidates are invited to submit their research proposals as described before the set deadline along with the approval of the host institution.
- **Step 2** –Candidates will have the opportunity to respond if potential questions Jerome Lejeune Foundation reviewer. The main purpose is to provide applicants with the possibility to comment on any potential misinterpretations or misunderstandings that may have been made by the experts while initially assessing their proposals.
- **Step 3** – Scientific assessment: The evaluation of the scientific quality of research proposals is implemented in an independent confidential manner. The evaluation ranking will be kept confidential.
- **Step 4** – Public engagement interview: a group of people as described above will interview the two finalist candidates with 20 minutes of presentation of the project and 30min of questions. Their role is to assess their ability to share their research project with a non-academic audience, in particular:
 - Potential to act as a spokesperson in public debate;
 - Popularization and pedagogical skills;
 - Ability to highlight the value of the research project to society.

- **Step 5** – Selection & publication results

As soon as the Board has taken its decision, the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund informs the Institution/Unit Research through the Institution's representative. Results of the campaign with the name of the finalist and the name of the Institution will be present on Jerome Lejeune Foundation website.

The Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund should be aware for any communications related to this funding (publication, poster, oral communication, etc.). The candidate should be able to present his/her project before initiation, at mid-term and the results at the end of the project.

Before final selection, the board has always the possibility not to select any candidate if no submitted dossier fit the expected value, or if the Foundations have finally to prioritize their funds.

VII Grant and Agreement terms and conditions

The project selected by the dedicated Board and funded by the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund is a combination of a candidate, a project and a host Institution/ Unit Research. Thus, the candidate is expected to carry out the project as described in the proposal, and as acted in the grant agreement. Furthermore, it is expected that the candidate establishes and concludes the funded research project in association with the original host institution/ Unit Research (applicant's legal entity).

Upon written acceptance of the grant offer by the selected candidate, the Jerome Lejeune Foundation will liaise with the Operational Contact of the grantee's host institution to set in motion the contracting process. Grantees will be kept updated by their Operational Contacts throughout the contracting process.

7.1 Duration of the agreement

Due to the ground-breaking nature of frontier research projects, it is expected that all projects start within 9 months (after publication date of final results). The Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

The agreement period covers the granted research project period. Should the Jerome Lejeune Foundation funding not be entirely spent at the end of the agreement, either remaining funds are paid back to the funders.

Should the Post-doctoral fellow leaves the host institution at the start of the project or before the end of the project, remaining funds should be paid back to the funder, i.e. the Jerome Lejeune Foundation. In exceptional circumstances, the Foundations could ask the institution to finalize the research project with the unspent funding. If the candidate cannot complete her/his project, it could be asked to the institution and the supervisor to find a new candidate for taking over the defined research. If no new candidate could be found, the project could be cancelled.

7.2 Amount & payment of grant Payment

Amount & payment of grant Payment of the grant is dependent on

- (i) The contract agreement signing with the Institution/ Research Unit, and
- (ii) The Postdoctoral Fellow taking up the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

Grants are paid in four (4) installments:

- **An advance payment (40%) (as pre-financing)** is made when the post-doctoral grantee starts the research project;
- **Two interim payments (25% each): respectively 12 months and 18 months after the starting of the project**, and depending of reception of scientific and financial information on the status of the Research received by Jerome Lejeune Foundation;
- **A final payment (10%) is made at the end of the project**, on the basis of actual expenditures, and following reception of scientific and financial information on the status of the Research, and status concerning the final publication received by the Jerome Lejeune Foundation.

Those research status will be followed by two scientific members of the initial jury or delegates (§ 5.1)

7.3 Use of grant

The sole purpose of the financial grant paid by Jerome Lejeune Foundation is to support the research project conducted by the finalist(s). **Therefore, the Jerome Lejeune Foundation funding cannot be used for administrative and infrastructural expenses.**

Eligible costs are:

- Salaries of the postdoctoral fellow.
- Equipment/Resources such as databases, survey costs, consumables...
- Academic activities such as conferences, workshops, field-work...
- Outreach activities beyond academic audience such as media pieces, conference to broad audience.
- Other costs directly linked to the research project.
- Employment contracting framework.

The Jerome Lejeune Foundation requests that the Institution undertakes to:

- Legally employ the Post-Doctoral Fellow as a postdoctoral researcher in the department or the laboratory, under an employment contract that complies with current national legislation of the Institution.
- Entrust the Post-Doctoral Fellow with the research for which he/she has been given authorization to work at the host Institution.

- Provide the Post-Doctoral Fellow with the necessary resources to conduct his/her postdoctoral research.
- Appoint a Scientific Advisor to manage the Post-Doctoral Fellowship for the entire duration.
- Agree to the involvement of the Jerome Lejeune Foundation contact person whose role is notably to ensure regular contact between the Post-Doctoral Fellow and the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund with the general aim of helping the young researcher in his/her career.
- Allow the Post-Doctoral Fellow to attend meetings and seminars organized in connection with the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund.

The Post-Doctoral Fellow is placed under the sole responsibility of the Institution/ Research Unit which ensures that the postdoctoral research project runs smoothly and is properly conducted.

7.4 Monitoring of grant

A scientific report is requested from the researcher, one year, 18 months after the launch of the Postdoctoral Fellowship project that includes information on the progress of the research project, and a financial report on funding expenditures. At the end of the fellowship, the researcher is also requested to fill in an Executive Summary Report to inform the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund of the results of the research and provide the financial report showing a statement of expenditures. Specific outputs from the project are asked to be included (e.g. publications).

7.5 Intellectual property

The Post-Doctoral Fellow remains fully independent to conduct his/her research project. Furthermore, the Foundations will not claim any right to the ownership or use of the results coming from the research program, and the Institution and/or the Post-Doctoral Fellow and member or his/her team keep full ownership of their results, in accordance with the legal and/or contractual provisions existing between them.

7.6 Publicity on grant

The Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund is a philanthropic initiative and therefore the publicity on the grant is only designed to enable Jerome Lejeune Foundation to promote its general interest role. The foundation may ask some oral / written presentation at the beginning, mid-term and at the end of the project. The title of both fellowship and researcher should include the name of Jerome Lejeune Foundation. When communicating on the Jerome Lejeune Foundation fellowship, the Institution and the researcher should mention the support of the Jerome Lejeune Foundation Research Fund. Any publication should also include the mention “Jerome Lejeune Foundation”.

7.7 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Protection of personal data

The Parties agree to comply with all applicable laws and regulations related to the protection of personal data, in particular the (EU) Regulation 2016/679 on the “*protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data*” (hereinafter “GDPR”).

The term “personal data” shall have the same meaning as in the article 4 of the GDPR.

Each Party shall use any personal data disclosed by the other Party only for the purposes for which they have been collected (the Research Project). Each Party shall protect such personal data against unlawful or unauthorized treatment, and maintain its security by implementing appropriate technical and organizational measures to ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk.

Each Party has the obligation to inform the data subjects of the disclosure of their personal data to the other Party for the purposes of the communication related to the Research Project.

Each Party has the obligation to facilitate the exercise of data subject rights, under the articles 15 to 22 of the RGPD/GDPR, which are the right of access, the right to rectification, to erasure, to object, to restriction of processing and to data portability.
