

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

August 30, 2024

HELMHOLTZ DOCTORAL AWARD

funded by the Initiative and Networking Fund of the
President of the Helmholtz Association

Aim of the funding

Through their scientific work, Helmholtz doctoral students contribute to solving the most pressing problems facing our society. The Helmholtz Association wants to inspire talented young researchers at an early stage and support them in promoting scientific excellence.

For this purpose, the Association awards the Helmholtz Doctoral Award, which recognizes previous scientific achievements and offers incentives to apply the scientific knowledge and skills gained during the doctorate.

The Helmholtz Doctoral Award is intended to encourage doctoral candidates to pursue a scientific career and mission-oriented research. They also have the opportunity to position themselves at the interface between science and application, to develop and expand entrepreneurial skills and to help shape the transfer of science to society at an early stage.

In this context, the President of the Helmholtz Association welcomes and strongly supports the nomination of outstanding young female scientists in order to make their scientific research achievements even more visible.

In order to recognize both doctoral theses with a direct link to application and doctoral theses without an explicit link to application, the Helmholtz Association will award **the doctoral prize in two different tracks**. The respective original strength of a doctoral thesis - **outstanding knowledge-driven research or outstanding application-oriented research** - can be emphasized in the nomination by choosing the appropriate track.

Six prizes will be awarded in each of the tracks (i.e. 12 prizes in total), one in each of the six research fields (Energy; Earth and Environment; Health; Aeronautics, Space and Transport; Matter; Information) of the Helmholtz Association.

Application process

The Helmholtz Centers nominate suitable candidates for the individual research areas. The design of the pre-selection of candidates is the responsibility of the Centers. **Each Center can submit a maximum of one proposal per research area for each of the above-mentioned tracks**. The proposals are submitted via the executive boards of the Centers by **01.02.2025**. Self-applications from doctoral candidates are not permitted.

Proposals are submitted in electronic form via the IVF project management platform ProMeta. This will be possible from the end of November 2024 on. You can create an account at ivf.helmholtz.de via self-registration to submit the application forms. After logging in with the user name assigned by the platform and the password you have created yourself, you will be taken to the overview page. Here you can find current calls for proposals and can enter the master data and upload the documents via the "Submit application" button.

Please contact Lia Lang (lia.lang@helmholtz.de) or Anna Tschaut (anna.tschaut@helmholtz.de) if you have any questions about the content of the call

for proposals, or Henri Marschall (impulsfonds@helmholtz.de) if you have any questions about submitting an application via ProMeta.

Track A

The award stands for the recognition and appreciation of outstanding achievements in **basic science research** during the doctoral phase. The aim is to support talented young scientists at an early stage and to inspire them for research in the long term. The award is intended **to provide an incentive to remain in science** and to support the scientific career path.

Application

Doctoral candidates applying for this track must have completed their doctorate at a Helmholtz Center with excellent results in the past 14 months. The cut-off date for the above deadline is the date on which the application must be submitted to the Helmholtz office (February 1, 2025). The decisive date is the date of the defense of the PhD at the university. The defense must have already taken place when the application is submitted. An award can only be made upon presentation of the doctoral certificate or a corresponding certificate from the university. This must be received by the Helmholtz Office by May 30, 2025 at the latest.

Funding Scope, duration and object of the funding

One prize is awarded in each of the Helmholtz Association's six research fields (Energy; Earth and Environment; Health; Aeronautics, Space and Transport; Matter; Information).

The successful candidates will receive a one-time **prize money of 5,000 euros**, which they can use for their own scientific purposes.

In addition, the award winners are given the opportunity to spend **up to six months abroad** at an international research institution. A travel and material allowance of up to 2,000 euros per month for up to six months is provided for this purpose. The stay can be arranged flexibly by the grantees, but must begin within one year of the announcement of the funding decision. In addition, the grantees must be employed at a Helmholtz Center for the entire duration of their stay abroad.

Exceptional case: If the grantees are employed at a research institution abroad after completing their doctorate, they have the option of using the travel and material cost allowance for a stay at a Helmholtz Center submitted the proposal.

Documents to be submitted

- **Cover sheet** with the following information:
 - Candidate's name and contact details (incl. e-mail and telephone)
 - Title of the candidate's doctoral thesis
 - Helmholtz Center, Institute, Supervisor
 - Assignment to the Helmholtz program, 5-6 keywords
 - Specification the track

- Copy of the **doctoral certificate** or a corresponding certificate from the university (by 30.05.2025 at the latest), the doctoral certificate and, if applicable, other certificates (e.g. of achievements within the framework of graduate schools and/or colleges)
- A detailed **curriculum vitae** (incl. awards, scholarships, stays abroad, presentations/posters at conferences, etc.)
- **List of publications** (publications made during and after the doctorate)
- **Letter of Recommendation** from the board and/or supervisor containing the following information (max. 2 pages):
 - Justification for the selection of the candidate (also the realization of the research to the mission of the Helmholtz Association),
 - Evaluation of the doctoral performance and other achievements to date,
 - Assessment of the candidate's potential in terms of their skills and personality
- **Letter of motivation** Track A (max. 3 pages) of the nominee considering the following points:
 - What can your research do?
 - Who is your research aimed at?
 - What do you think are the added values of your research for society?
 - What professional steps would you like to take after your doctorate?
 - What idea(s) do you have about how you would like to use the funding opportunity of a stay abroad?

Track B

Doctoral students are to be encouraged to conduct **mission-oriented research** and thus **to position themselves at the interface between science and application**, to develop and expand entrepreneurial skills, and to help shape the transfer of science to society at an early stage. In addition to completed doctoral theses with application relevance, this track of the doctoral award also aims to provide an incentive for those still pursuing a doctorate to examine their doctoral project for transfer opportunities and to incorporate these into their work.

Application

Doctoral candidates applying for this track have either **a) completed their doctoral theses** at a Helmholtz Center with excellent results in the past 14 months or **b) are about to complete** their doctorate. Case a): The deadline for the above-mentioned deadline is the date on which the application must be submitted to the Helmholtz office (February 1, 2025). The date of the defense of the doctorate at the university is decisive. The defense must have already taken place when the application is submitted. An award can only be made upon presentation of the doctoral certificate or a corresponding certificate from the university. This must be submitted to the Helmholtz Office by May 30, 2025 at the latest. Case b): The expected completion of the doctorate (submission of the doctoral thesis) should be achieved within a maximum of one year after the nomination deadline (the objective agreed in the last work plan with the Thesis Advisory Committee counts).

Funding Scope, duration and object of the funding

One prize is awarded in each of the Helmholtz Association's six research fields (Energy; Earth and Environment; Health; Aeronautics, Space and Transport; Matter; Information).

The successful candidates receive one-off **award money of 5,000 euros**, which they can use for their own scientific purposes.

In addition, the award winners receive funding for a three-month **Helmholtz Field Study Fellowship**. The Field Study Fellowship finances the market exploration phase to better understand customer needs and is accompanied by field study mentoring. The conditions correspond to the Helmholtz Field Study Fellowship within the framework of the Helmholtz Enterprise Instrument (see [here](#)). The Helmholtz Field Study Fellowship must be officially notified to the Helmholtz Head Office by December 1, 2025 at the latest and must start 1 year after the funding decision has been announced. In addition, the grantees must be employed or associated with a Helmholtz Center.

Documents to be submitted

- **Cover sheet** with the following information:
 - Name and contact details (incl. e-mail and telephone) of the candidate,
 - Title of the candidate's doctoral thesis
 - Helmholtz Center, Institute, Supervisor
 - Assignment to the Helmholtz program, 5-6 keywords
 - Specification of the track
- Case a): Copy of the **doctoral certificate** or a corresponding certificate from the university (no later than May 30, 2025), the doctoral certificate and, if applicable, other certificates (e.g. on achievements within the framework of graduate schools and/or colleges)
- Case b):
 - **work plan** agreed with the Thesis Advisory Committee or comparable structure, which clearly states when the doctoral thesis is to be submitted
 - **Exposé** (3 pages) on the work status and initial results of the doctorate
- Detailed **curriculum vitae** (incl. awards, scholarships, stays abroad, lectures/posters at conferences, etc.)
- **List of publications** (publications made during the doctorate)
- **Letter of recommendation** from the board and/or supervisor containing the following information (max. 2 pages):
 - Justification for the selection of the candidate(s) (including the relation of the research to the mission of the Helmholtz Association),
 - Evaluation of doctoral performance and other previous achievements to date,
 - Assessment of the candidate's potential in terms of their skills and personality
- **Statement** by the transfer office on the application potential of the (previous) research on the following points (max. half a page each):
 - Brief general assessment by the transfer agent of the applicability or potential for application of the research results of the research project as presented.

- What has been achieved so far with regard to a possible transfer between research and application (e.g. involvement of non-scientific stakeholders, current TRL – Technology Readiness Level, if applicable)?
- **Letter of motivation** Track B (max. 3 pages) from the nominee, taking into account the following points:
 - What can your research do?
 - Who is your research aimed at (who specifically could be users or customers for the application of your findings)?
 - What do you think is the added value of your research for the economy or society and what specific problems of potential users or customers can / could be solved with the results of your research?
 - What questions do you have for potential clients that you would like to answer as part of the Field Study Fellowship?

Decision-making process

The award winners are selected on the basis of the assessment of the Helmholtz Association's Management Boards and in consultation with the President of the Helmholtz Association. A personal presentation of the candidates is not planned.

Application deadline and timetable

01.02.2025	Deadline for the submission of proposals by the Helmholtz Centers to the Helmholtz Head Office
17.03.2025	Forwarding of formally eligible applications to the Management Boards of the Helmholtz Association
15.05.2025	Submission of nominations from the management boards to the office
Subsequently	Decision by the President of the Helmholtz Association
07.07.2025	Awarding of the Helmholtz Doctoral Award by the President of the Helmholtz Association in Berlin

Contact persons

General questions about the call:

Lia Lang: lia.lang@helmholtz.de, +49 30 206 329-18

Anna Tschaut: anna.tschaut@helmholtz.de, +49 30 206 329-18

Questions about submission via ProMeta:

Henri Marschall: impulsfonds@helmholtz.de

Questions about the Field Study Fellowship (Track B):

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