

HELSINKI COLLEGIUM FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

CORE FELLOWSHIP 2026

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

The objectives of the HCAS Core Fellowship Program

The Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies was established in 2001 as an independent institute of the University of Helsinki to enhance scholarly excellence in the humanities and social sciences, promote interaction between different fields of academic research, and to further international academic collaboration. The Collegium's fellowships are open to researchers in the humanities, social sciences, behavioral sciences, theology, and law, and to researchers in other fields focusing on topics related to the human sciences. The applicant's doctoral degree must have been conferred by the application deadline.

The Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies selects fellows through a competitive and international application process. Each year fewer than 5% of the applicants are accepted. The Collegium appoints fellows at different stages in their academic careers from post-doctoral scholars to full professors and from different disciplines, but has no fixed quotas for seniority, discipline, nationality, or gender. The Collegium is committed to promoting equality and preventing discrimination in its operations.

Collegium fellows are employed by the University of Helsinki. They are subject to an annual workload used in Finnish universities, which is 1 612 hours per academic year. Starting from the second year of their term, fellows should allocate approximately 5% of their annual workload to teaching (including supervision). Researchers must submit a final report of their academic activities at the end of their term in the Collegium.

The Collegium facilities in the center of Helsinki accommodate a multidisciplinary community of some 35 fellows. Fellows are expected to be present at the Collegium for 80% of the working hours of their annual workload and to contribute to the activities of the Collegium. Participation in the weekly research seminar is an essential aspect of the fellows' work at the Collegium. All core fellows are granted a personal research allowance for travel and other research expenses. Short research visits abroad are possible, but longer trips should be arranged when the University is not in session.

Applications must be prepared in accordance with the instructions below. Successful applicants should provide evidence of their ability to work in an international, multidisciplinary research environment and of their ability to publish at a high international level. In the application documents, applicants must also indicate how they plan to participate in the multidisciplinary collaboration central for the Collegium as an institute for advanced study. Relevant evidence may be provided by reference to publications, academic activities, participation in research projects, appointments at research institutes, or in the research proposal itself. Planned or existing collaboration with researchers of the University of Helsinki may be explained in the letter of motivation, in which the applicants are asked to detail why the University of Helsinki is a suitable environment for their research.

The Collegium does not consider research plans that propose to rewrite the applicant's PhD thesis as a book.

The Collegium does not grant two consecutive funding periods to one researcher. If an applicant has been at the Collegium before, at least seven years must have passed after the previous fellowship term, and the applicant must justify why they ought to be accepted for another funding period.

All fellowships will begin their term in August 2026.

How to apply

The Collegium invites applications for core fellowships once a year. Only individual researchers are eligible to apply. **The application period will start on August 21, 2025, and end on September 11, 2025, at 23:59 Helsinki local time.** Final decisions will be made in **early March 2026.**

The application and the required attachments should be submitted via the electronic recruitment system of the University of Helsinki. The link to the application form can be found on the website of the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies at the beginning of the application period (<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/helsinki-collegium-advanced-studies/apply/apply-hcas-core-fellowship>).

Applications must be submitted by **23:59 Helsinki local time on September 11, 2025.** Only applications submitted within the designated application period will be processed. Applicants are advised to log into the electronic system well before the end of the application period to ensure that they are familiar with the system. If applicants experience any difficulties with the system, they should contact the Collegium (collegium-recruitment@helsinki.fi) before the deadline for applications. The applications cannot be modified after the deadline.

Application documents

Applications should be submitted via **an electronic application form** and complemented with the attachments listed below. Please **combine all required attachments, including your CV, into a single PDF document in the order indicated below**, title this document as Surname_application and upload it in the application system. The CV should be also uploaded as a separate document.

- Curriculum vitae (max. 8 000 characters)
- Abstract of the research proposal (max. 4 000 characters)
- List of publications
- Research proposal (max. 12 000 characters)
- Letter of motivation (max. 8 000 characters)

No other documents (e.g., letters of recommendation, statements on doctoral dissertations, writing samples, or publishing contracts) will be considered in the selection process. **Successful early career candidates who are offered a fellowship position will be asked to deliver a certificate of their PhD degree before they are formally appointed.**

The documents should be written in English in accordance with the instructions provided below. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Applicants will be disqualified if the character limits have been exceeded or if the attachments are in the wrong format. The applicant's name must be included on each page of all the attachments. Applicants are requested to avoid colored backgrounds in the attachments. Finally, we kindly ask applicants to use their official name throughout the application and when contacting the Collegium.

Application Form

In the application form, applicants are asked to specify two or three fields of research in order of importance for their project (1 = primary field, 2 = secondary field, etc.). This information will be used in the assignment of evaluators for each application.

Applicants must indicate the stage of their research career. The alternatives are “early career”, “mid-career”, and “full professor”. Early career refers to the period of five years following the completion of a doctoral degree, excluding family leave and equivalent periods. Mid-career refers to a position equivalent to that of an associate professor, university lecturer, or docent. Applicants holding fixed-term professorships should also indicate their stage as mid-career. Full professor refers to the position of a permanent full professorship.

The applicants’ merits will be evaluated relative to their indicated level of seniority. When determining the salary for fellows at the Collegium, the job titles corresponding to the three levels of seniority are post-doctoral researcher, university researcher, and visiting professor. For the purposes of the employment contract, the seniority level of successful applicants will be determined together with the director of the Collegium in accordance with the University of Helsinki’s guidelines.

Visiting professors (full professors) will be appointed for six or twelve months; university researchers (mid-career) will be appointed for a period of one to two years, and post-doctoral researchers (early career) will be appointed for a period of one to three years. The applicant must indicate the preferred length of the research period in the application form.

Supplementary funding needed for research expenses must be specified in case the research requires exceptionally expensive equipment or frequent travel. Please note that by appointing a candidate, the Collegium does not guarantee that such expenses will be covered.

Information about the applicant’s gender is for statistical purposes only. As this information has no influence on the evaluation process, applicants may choose not to disclose this information. Information about the applicant’s nationality is also for statistical purposes. Again, this information has no influence on the evaluation process.

Finally, **applicants are kindly asked to fill in every section of the application form.** Please do not, for example, simply refer to the enclosed attachments.

Attachments

The electronic application system will ask you to upload your CV as a separate document. In addition to this, **please combine all required attachments, including your CV, into a single PDF document** in the order indicated below, title this document as Surname_application, and upload it in the application system.

Curriculum vitae

The curriculum vitae (maximum of 8 000 characters including spaces) must contain the following information:

- Personal data and academic education, with your name on each page
- Posts and positions of primary importance
- Research funding and grants during the past five years
- Most significant expert assignments and elected positions in the academic world

- Most significant scholarly honours and prizes
- Language proficiency, especially when significant to the completion of the research

As a possible model for CV, you may consider the template by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity: <https://tenk.fi/en/advice-and-materials/template-researchers-curriculum-vitae>

Abstract of the research proposal

The maximum length of the abstract is 4 000 characters, including spaces. The number of characters used must be indicated at the end of the abstract. The abstract must contain:

- The applicant's name and academic degree on each page
- The title of the research project
- The field(s) of research
- A brief description of the research project, indicating the aim, primary research material, methods, and the relevance of the project

Applicants are advised to pay special attention to the abstract of their research proposal, as this will play an important role in the selection process.

List of publications

In the list of publications, applicants should indicate their five most significant publications with an asterisk in the margin. Please make sure to mark your name on each page of the list of publications as well.

Peer-reviewed scientific articles should be listed separately from non-refereed scientific articles. Publications intended for general audience should be listed separately from academic publications. Theses (doctoral dissertations) should be listed separately from other publications. Non-English titles of articles and books must be translated into English. Applicants may also provide the address of a website containing a complete list of their publications. The length of the articles (i.e., the page numbers) must appear in the list of publications. Every page of the list of publications must indicate the applicant's name.

For a model, you may consider the instructions of the Research Council of Finland: <https://www.aka.fi/en/research-funding/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply-for-funding/az-index-of-application-guidelines2/list-of-publications/>

Research proposal

The maximum length of the research proposal is 12 000 characters including spaces but excluding bibliography. The number of characters used must be indicated at the end of the proposal.

The research proposal must indicate the following in this order:

- The relevance of the research within a broader academic context
- The problem statement as well as the research design
- The current state and schedule of the applicant's research project
- The interdisciplinary potential of the research: the most important national and international cooperation partners, interdisciplinary cooperation, and the assumed significance of the research results for interdisciplinary research cooperation

- Expected travel and field work during the funding period, if any, including an estimate of the period of absence and its timing
- A publishing plan for the research results, especially for publications aimed at an international audience
- Issues concerning research ethics, if relevant
- In case the applicant has been a fellow at the Collegium before, a justification of why the applicant should be accepted for another funding period

Each page of the research proposal must indicate the applicant's name.

Applicants are reminded of the fact that the evaluators who assess the applications represent several different fields. For this reason, the research proposal must be clear to evaluators outside the applicant's own discipline.

Letter of motivation

The maximum length of the letter of motivation is 8 000 characters including spaces. The number of characters used must be indicated at the end of the letter. Applicants are asked to explain why the Collegium would be an ideal place for the proposed research project and how the project would benefit from cooperation at the University of Helsinki. In the letter, applicants may also describe their career plans, including possible plans for further funding.

Evaluation and selection

Evaluation criteria

The criteria for the evaluation of applications are the scientific merits of the research proposal, the theoretical and methodological framework (innovativeness and significance from the perspective of multidisciplinary potential and/or a specific research field), the feasibility of the research proposal, the applicant's scholarly merits relative to their career stage, and the suitability of the research proposal for the Collegium and the University of Helsinki. The instructions given to evaluators are available online on the Collegium's website.

Selection process

Applications received by the deadline and meeting the formal requirements (doctoral degree conferred by the deadline, suitable field of research, required attachments following the guidelines stated above) will be evaluated in two stages. In the first round of evaluation, professors of the University of Helsinki will assess the applications based on the applicants' CV, list of publications, abstract, and letter of motivation. The most promising applications (ca. 20 percent) will be sent out to the second, external round of evaluation. In the second round, each application will be assessed by two international experts.

Based on the evaluations, the director will compose the short list of the most successful candidates. The director will make the final decision after hearing the board of the Collegium. Applicants will be informed by email. The decision will be published on the Collegium website.

Further information is available by email from collegium-recruitment@helsinki.fi.