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Guide for Applicants

Niels Bohr Professors 2011

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
What Is a Niels Bohr Professorship?	4
Available funding and applicant quota	4
Eligible costs and salary of the Niels Bohr professor	5
Organization of a Niels Bohr Professorship	5
Contract negotiation and inauguration	5
Evaluation and follow-up	6
Assessment and Selection	7
Application form and submission of proposals	7
Assessment criteria	8
The peer review process	9
Board processing and decision	9
Time frame	10

The DNRF in brief

- The DNRF was established in 1991 as an independent organization with the objective of funding basic research at a high international level.
- Since 1991, the DNRF has committed itself to supporting Danish research with 5 billion DKK (nearly 700 M Euro).
- The DNRF receives 95% of its funds as endowments from the government.
- The DNRF spends approximately 400 MDKK (around 50 M Euro) annually.
- A total of 77 centers have been established since 1993. The DNRF has also launched a range of other smaller programs.

Introduction

Along with the Call for Proposals, this guide provides information to potential applicants who intend to submit a proposal for a Niels Bohr Professorship to the Danish National Research Foundation.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **Friday, December 2, 2011, at 16.00.**

Proposals must be written in English using an application form that can be downloaded from www.dg.dk. The application form must be submitted electronically as a PDF document attached to an e-mail sent to dq@dg.dk

Applicants are advised to visit www.dg.dk for further information about the DNRF, the Niels Bohr Professorship Program, and existing professorships.

Applicants may contact the secretariat if they have questions about the application process. Questions may be directed to:

Director Thomas Sinkjær, E-mail: ts@dg.dk, Tel.: +45 3318 1950 or

Research Adviser Marie-Louise Munch, E-mail: mlm@dg.dk, Tel.: +45 3318 1953

Previous Professor Programs

The Danish National Research Foundation has previously launched two calls for professorships in 2005 and 2006, funding nine professorships with approx. 162MDKK. The overall objective of the two professorship programs was to increase international recruitment of senior researchers to Danish universities. Based on the continued need to develop attractive programs to recruit high-level international researchers to Denmark, the board has decided to launch a new and slightly revised Niels Bohr Professorship Program in 2011.

What Is a Niels Bohr Professorship?

The Niels Bohr Professorship Program seeks to attract strong, international, senior-level researchers who are able to significantly advance Danish research through the internationalization of a specific area of research in Denmark with lasting, long-term effects.

The Niels Bohr professor must have a high standing in the international research community. During the funding period, the Niels Bohr professor is expected to act as a catalyst, supporting a strong scientific cohesiveness, and demonstrate scientific/scholarly leadership of the hosting research environment.

The DNRF welcomes proposals in which the Niels Bohr professor stays in Denmark for the entire 5-year funding period. However, other models in which the Niels Bohr professor remains in Denmark for shorter or longer visits are also welcomed. The time spent in Denmark is expected to correspond to 50-100% of a full-time equivalent.

The focus, structure, and size of the proposed Niels Bohr Professorship is such that it sets the stage for research ventures that are not feasible within conventional funding from other sources.

The DNRF welcomes proposals for research programs characterized by novelty, creativity and excellence. Professorships can be established within and/or across all research areas.

The Niels Bohr professor may start up a new research group or enter into an existing one. It is possible to bring along junior researchers to Denmark.

The Niels Bohr professor must engage in research training activities, such as the supervision of Ph.D. students.

Available funding and applicant quota

A total of 200 MDKK is reserved for this call and the DNRF envisions that 6 to 8 professorships will be granted.

Each university can submit up to the following number of proposals:

- University of Copenhagen: 4 proposals
- University of Aarhus: 4 proposals
- Technical University of Denmark: 3 proposals
- University of Southern Denmark: 2 proposals
- Aalborg University: 2 proposals
- Copenhagen Business School: 1 proposals
- Roskilde University: 1 proposals
- IT University of Copenhagen: 1 proposal

Eligible costs and salary of the Niels Bohr professor

Each Niels Bohr Professorship grant is large and very flexible. An estimated budget for the funding period must be enclosed with the proposal.

The grant may cover expenses for the salary of the Niels Bohr professor, Ph.D. students, post-doctoral staff, visiting staff, technical and administrative staff, travel costs and conferences, operational costs and equipment, and overhead (44% for universities).

The specific salary level of the Niels Bohr professor is arranged with the host institution. The Niels Bohr professor may be eligible for the 26% gross income tax scheme for researchers. Please find more information [here](#) (the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation).

Organization of a Niels Bohr Professorship

The Niels Bohr Professorship Program is characterized by a significant degree of flexibility, allowing applicants to freely construct an organizational structure and research plan that supports the objective of the program. The organizational structure must be clear and coherent in terms of optimizing the probability and potential for a strongly internationalized research environment and research area.

The assessment of the proposal will emphasize that a strategy for meeting the objective of the program is carefully displayed.

Both junior and senior researchers are to be affiliated with the Niels Bohr Professorship, and, according to the proposed research program, they should share a common idea or vision and an overall and clearly defined set of research objectives.

The Niels Bohr Professorship may build on both new and existing research collaborations while maintaining the Niels Bohr professor as the scientific and organizational focal point. It is important that the Niels Bohr professor exerts a strong influence on the surrounding research environments.

Contract negotiation and inauguration

After the board makes its decision (cf. 'Assessment and Selection' below), the DNRF will launch contract negotiations with the Niels Bohr professor and the host institution regarding co-financing, office and laboratory space, and embedment plans after funding from the DNRF ends.

An official inauguration of each new Niels Bohr Professorship will be held shortly after it starts operating.

Evaluation and follow-up

The DNRF takes a keen interest in the development of the Niels Bohr Professorships. Through continuous dialogue and follow-up meetings, the DNRF will follow the development of each Niels Bohr Professorship. This set-up provides an opportunity to offer advice or make adjustments underway, as well as providing an opportunity to learn more about the funding mechanism and how it can best be organized.

In order to systematically collect information on the progress of each grant, the DNRF requests all grant holders to submit a short annual report with information on a number of key indicators, including publications, dissemination of research, outreach activities, educational activities, external relations, and organizational development.

Excellent frontline research – what kind of research is supported?

The term “basic research” is included in the Danish name of the DNRF (Danmarks Grundforskningsfond), signaling that the DNRF supports what may be defined as fundamental research.

Some previous and existing DNRF grant holders (primarily Centers of Excellence) produce results that are immediately useful, while others pursue pure “blue sky” research. What matters is that the research funded by the DNRF is considered truly novel, highly ambitious and excellent.

The DNRF welcomes outstanding research of a high international caliber that may be described as ambitious, highly creative, original, scientifically daring, and potentially groundbreaking.

Grant holders are expected to engage in pondering some of the large unsolved questions and address the challenges that intrigue them the most. The philosophy is that when excellent people work with problems they are most passionate about, groundbreaking results are likely to follow. In other words, the DNRF welcomes curiosity-driven research – or what might be described as exceptional researchers’ dream projects.

Assessment and Selection

Application form and submission of proposals

Proposals must be submitted using an application form that can be downloaded from www.dg.dk. The application form should be submitted electronically as a PDF document attached to an e-mail sent to dg@dg.dk no later than **Friday, December 2, 2011, by 16.00**.

The proposal must include the following:

- A short summary (maximum: 4,800 characters including spaces) summarizing the research idea and the added value of the proposed research, by addressing the following issues:
 - The international standing of the proposed Niels Bohr professor
 - How will the Niels Bohr Professorship redefine the research in its respective field in terms of new insights and results?
 - How will the Niels Bohr Professorship significantly advance Danish research and the internationalization of a specific area of research in Denmark with lasting, long-term effects?

(This text will also be used as an introduction to the proposal when identifying potential peer reviewers.)

- A presentation of the research program (maximum: 12,000 characters including spaces), which may include a description of the proposed research idea, its dimension of novelty and potential for groundbreaking results and an argument for its scientific/scholarly or investigative relevance.
- An organizational strategy for securing lasting effects from the internationalization of the research environment (maximum: 10,000 characters including spaces).
 - How will a creative and dynamic research environment be established and/or strengthened through the presence of the Niels Bohr professor?
 - How will the Niels Bohr professor contribute to the internationalization of the research environment?
 - Which competencies and capacities will be involved?
 - What are the plans for how much time the Niels Bohr professor will be spending in Denmark?
- References to the relevant literature (maximum: 4,800 characters incl. spaces).
- A description of the host institution's commitments and visions for the proposed Niels Bohr Professorship. Please include arguments for how the Niels Bohr Professorship will interact with other related activities and plans of the host institution.
This also includes plans for securing a permanent position or a committed, long-term affiliation, and thus, a lasting effect of the grant. (Maximum: 4,800 characters including spaces).
- CV of the proposed Niels Bohr professor, including the following:

- A brief and concise outline of professional career (maximum: 4,800 characters including spaces).
- Please state the ten most influential publications. A full list of publications may be enclosed.
- CVs for each of the participating senior researchers, including the total number of publications (maximum: 2,400 characters including spaces per CV).
- A budget for a five-year period (as indicated in the application form)

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria follow three dimensions: the quality of the research, the organization of the Niels Bohr Professorship and the added value and spillover effect of the Niels Bohr Professorship. Each proposal will be assessed by the board and a peer review panel with a view to all three dimensions.

Each peer review panel will be presented with a set of Terms of Reference based on the criteria mentioned below.

- **Research quality and leadership**

- The Niels Bohr professor has a high standing in the international research community.
- The Niels Bohr professor acts as a catalyst, supporting scientific cohesiveness, and demonstrates scientific/scholarly leadership.
- The novelty, creativity and excellence of the proposed research program.
- The proposed research is ambitious and original and has the potential for breakthroughs in the relevant research field(s).

- **Research organization**

- The focus, structure, and size of the proposed Niels Bohr Professorship is such that it sets the stage for research ventures that are not feasible within conventional funding from other sources.
- Applicants may freely construct an organizational structure that supports the objectives of the program. It must be clear and coherent in terms of optimizing the probability and potential for a strongly internationalized research environment and research area. The Niels Bohr professor can either start up his/her own group or enter into an existing one.
- The proposal displays a careful understanding of the correlation between the organization and the objective of the Niels Bohr Professorship in terms of advancing the internationalization of the research area and environment in question. This also includes the commitments of the host institution in terms of securing a lasting effect of the professorship as well as the plans for how much time the Niels Bohr professor will be spending in Denmark (expected to correspond to 50-100% of a full-time equivalent).

- **Added value and spillover effect of the Niels Bohr Professorship**

- The presence of a Niels Bohr professor will significantly advance the research environment. It will also influence research surrounding research environments.
- The Niels Bohr Professorship includes high-quality research personnel in order to establish a creative and dynamic international research environment.
- The Niels Bohr Professorship will provide an inspirational training ground for young researchers, including supervision and research training activities.

The peer review process

The DNRF will assemble a peer review panel for each proposal, consisting of three international experts within the relevant research area(s) for external peer review. The reviewers should optimally possess an international standing equivalent to that of the proposed Niels Bohr professor. Each reviewer is asked to deliver a report of three to five pages addressing a number of questions stated in the Terms of Reference.

Before the DNRF sends the proposals to the reviewers, both reviewers and applicants are asked to inform the secretariat about any possible conflicts of interest (such as close family or friendship ties, cooperation and co-publications, etc.). If such a conflict is identified, the reviewer will not take part in the evaluation, and an alternative reviewer will be invited to participate in the review.

The DNRF seeks advice on identifying potential peer reviewers from external sources such as:

- The Danish Council for Independent Research (DFF)
- The European Science Foundation (ESF)
- The National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Applicants

Each applicant may submit the names of three potential reviewers, one of whom will be selected by the DNRF to serve on the panel. The DNRF will select the other two reviewers based on recommendations from external or internal sources. The DNRF has chosen this process in order to ensure that the composition of the peer review panel embraces the scientific scope of the proposal.

The DNRF uses an open and transparent process in its evaluation process. The peer review reports will not be anonymous, and reviewers and applicants will know each other's identities. Applicants are given an opportunity to comment on the composition of the peer review panel and can, in addition, comment on the reviews prior to the board's decision.

Board processing and decision

The board makes its decision on the basis of the proposals, three peer reviews for each proposal and any comments on the reviews that the applicant may have.

The quality of the reviews received by the DNRF is generally very high, and the reviews usually provide the board and the applicant with good advice. However, although the reviews serve as very important input to the board, it is the board that makes the final decision. The board

thoroughly discusses each proposal, arguing in each case why a proposal should or should not be funded.

After the board has processed the proposals, all applicants will be informed of the outcome.

Time frame

Proposals must be submitted electronically to dg@dg.dk. The DNRF must receive all proposals no later than **Friday, December 2, 2011, by 16.00**. An application form can be downloaded from www.dg.dk.

Written peer review will take place from December 2011 through May 2012. The board will process the proposals and make its decision in June 2012, after which contract negotiations with successful applicants will be initiated.

Applicants whose proposals are rejected will be given a short written feedback outlining the terms on which the decision was made.

The Niels Bohr Professorships may start operating from August 2012.