# NOMIS-ISTA Fellowship Program

## Guide for Applicants 2024

The **NOMIS-ISTA Fellowship Program** offers excellent postdoctoral researchers the freedom to work on questions at the intersection of two or more scientific disciplines in a unique research environment, while also providing the security of outstanding scientific mentorship from proven leaders in their respective fields. A **cross-discipline project proposal**, to be **co-supervised by two group leaders from different disciplines**, identifies projects and fellows who demonstrate great flexibility, creativity and collaboration.

All research fields supported at ISTA will be eligible (see ista.ac.at/en/research). Should the specific interdisciplinary expertise required for the research project not be available at ISTA, an external secondary supervisor can be proposed. This external supervisor can host the fellow (secondment) for up to three months per fellowship year.

NOMIS and ISTA shall award two NOMIS Fellowships annually, following a two-stage application process (including interview).

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The **closing date** for the 2024 Call for Proposals is **June 13, 2024 (14:00 CEST)**

Further information on the program can be found at:
https://ista.ac.at/en/education/postdocs/nomis-ista-fellowship/

Applications can be submitted at: apply.ista.ac.at

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**Benefits of a NOMIS Fellowship**

- Cutting-edge and state-of-the-art resources (scientific service units, research and travel funds)
- Freedom to explore high-risk concepts; three-year fully funded position
- Open, collaborative, interdisciplinary research environment
- Enabling framework in which to develop interdisciplinary skills; dual mentorship
- Teaching within ISTA encouraged (but not required), aiming to create the most conducive environment for the creation and transfer of knowledge
- Scientific integrity and leadership training, as well as career development support
- Joining ISTA's and NOMIS Foundation's global networks of exceptional, pioneering researchers

**Eligibility Requirements**

- At the time of recruitment (i.e. within 8 months of the application deadline), applicants must have been awarded their PhD and *preferably* have acquired their first postdoctoral experience and/or interdisciplinary training. However, the NOMIS Fellowship Selection Panel will also consider exceptionally promising candidates who fall outside the above criteria.
- Applicants must have an existing affiliation to an academic/research institution (note: internal applicants must not have been employed at ISTA for than 12 months at the application deadline date).
- Following the initial evaluation round, top-ranked candidates must be available for a remote interview between August 19, 2024, and August 30, 2024.
- If successful, the NOMIS Fellowship must commence within six months of notification.

**Application Process: Overview**

1. Create an account at apply.app.ist.ac.at.
2. Verify your account by following the instructions contained within the email sent to you.
3. Complete the application by entering all required information and uploading all required documents (more information on this below).
4. Submit your application.

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*General notes on the application process*

Your application must contain all required information and documents **(including the reference letters from your referees)** and have been submitted to our online system by 14:00 CEST on the date of the application deadline.

Applications that are incomplete or ineligible will not be considered by the selection committee.

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**Application Form – Requirements**

Personal Data: This section of the application requests standard personal information[1] (e.g., your name, address, date of birth) as well as the (anticipated) date of PhD award.

PhD Education: In this section please complete all required fields about your PhD program.

Additional Education: This section is optional; however, if you wish to enter additional information about your academic background (e.g., undergraduate studies), the selection panel is happy to review the information as part of your application.

Supervisors: In this section you must identify the professors (supervisors) with whom you plan to work at ISTA. You will need to identify both a primary and secondary supervisor. You may also nominate a professor external to ISTA as secondary supervisor where the specific scientific expertise required is not available at ISTA. In this case, the selection of an external secondary supervisor must be briefly justified in the scientific proposal (see below).

Referees: You must submit the name and contact information for three referees. These referees should be former professors or other senior scientists with whom you have worked. Your potential host at ISTA may not be listed as one of the referees on your application.

You do not have to wait until you have fully submitted your application in order to notify your referees. Once you have entered your referees' information and saved the application, a 'contact referees' button will appear at the bottom of the page. Clicking this button will notify your referees that you have requested a letter of reference and they will receive an email from our application system informing them how to upload their reference letter. It is highly recommended to **click this button as soon as you have decided upon your referee choices**. We recommend you additionally contact your referee by email to inform them.

You may check on the status of these letters and, if needed, send reminders to your referees by logging into the system and viewing your submitted application. **A minimum of two reference letters must be received no later than the application deadline.** Applications with less than two reference letters at the application deadline will be rejected as incomplete. No exceptions will be made.

Application Information: Within the online forms, you must provide:

1. **Project title** (max. 100 characters including spaces)

2. **Project summary** (max. 300 words). This summary should be understandable and accessible for a broad scientific audience.

In this section you must also upload the following documents (pdf format) for your application to be considered complete and eligible:

3. **Scientific Proposal** (max. five pages, not including references) containing all essential information including:

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[1] **Data Privacy Statement**: ISTA processes your personal data in accordance with the statutory data protection regulations. For more information including processing for the purpose of application and quality management and your rights as a data subject please refer to our data privacy statement:  https://ist.ac.at/dataprotection/

- How the research proposed addresses unresolved and important questions in the respective scientific field
- Novelty and innovation of the outlined scientific approach
- High-risk/feasibility and potential impact of the proposed research
- How proposed research is different to/extends the bounds of both supervisors' current research
- If relevant, justification of why an external secondary supervisor is requested

4. **CV** (max. two pages) **& Publication List** (not included in page limit)

5. **Background and Motivation Statement** (max. two pages) including:

   - Most important scientific achievements and publications
   - Motivation for applying for a NOMIS Fellowship

6. **Completed Ethical Issues Table** (available at https://ista.ac.at/en/education/postdocs/nomis-ista-fellowship/ ). The ethical issues table must be fully completed. If it is determined that you have uploaded an incomplete ethical issues table, you will be asked to resubmit a completed table, provided your application was otherwise complete and submitted by the deadline.

The remaining documents are optional at this point although you should upload any available diplomas related to degrees listed in the PhD Education and Additional Education sections. This can be done using the 'other files' fields.

## Selection and Evaluation

Complete applications passing the initial eligibility and prescreening check by program management are evaluated by the NOMIS Fellowship Selection Panel based on the following criteria:

**Scientific Excellence: Applicant**
*Leadership potential; past achievements (incl. interdisciplinary research skills)*

**Scientific Excellence: Proposal**
*Research vision; creativity; high risk/feasibility; impact*

**Added Scientific Value**
*Extending boundaries of host mentor groups' and/or ISTA's research*

Top-ranked candidates after the initial selection-panel ranking meeting will be invited for a remote interview with selected selection panel members between August 19, 2024, and August 30, 2024. Final fellowship offers will then be made following a selection panel confirmation meeting.

All candidates will be notified of the outcome of their applications no later than two months after the application deadline.

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**Questions?** Should you have further questions about the NOMIS-ISTA Fellowship application process, please see the FAQs on the webpage, or contact nomis-fellowship@ista.ac.at

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## About NOMIS

The NOMIS Foundation supports and enables insight-driven science across all disciplines, focusing on researchers who put forth bold new ideas, exhibit a pioneering spirit and seek to inspire the world around them. The foundation's vision is to "create a spark" in the world of science by enabling pioneering research in the natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities that benefits humankind and our planet.

The foundation serves as a catalyst for scientific and human progress by supporting interdisciplinary research, establishing collaborative research networks and developing strategic partnerships. In addition to providing financial support, NOMIS endeavors to develop and strengthen the conditions conducive to the pursuit of high-risk basic research.

To learn more about the NOMIS Foundation and the research they support, please visit their website.

## About ISTA

The Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA) is a multidisciplinary research institution that combines basic science with graduate education. The scientists of ISTA perform theoretical and experimental research in biology, neuroscience, physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, Earth science, astronomy and related fields. They are organized in small- to medium-size research groups that interact with each other, also across the boundaries of traditional disciplines. Each research group of ISTA is headed by a tenured or tenure-track professor. Shared scientific facilities concentrate cutting-edge equipment and scientific expertise in scientific computing, bio-imaging, electron microscopy (including cryo), nanofabrication, nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, life science and pre-clinical studies.

The core principles of the ISTA faculty selection process – person before area, quality before speed – have resulted an unprecedentedly high concentration of scientifically innovative leaders: Over three-quarters of faculty have won at least one ERC Frontier grant. ISTA's ERC application success rate of almost 50% is also by far the highest in Europe among all institutions hosting more than 30 ERC grantees. In addition to ISTA's success in recruiting world-leading faculty, its interdisciplinary design has resulted in verifiably excellent scientific output: ISTA ranked eighth in Nature Index 2018's 'rising stars' of the world (research institutes established within the last 30 years), the highest placed European institute and the only institution outside of Asia to appear in the top 10. This was surpassed in 2019, when the Nature Index ranked ISTA number 3 among the world's best research institutes based on research output (normalized by size of research institute).

To learn more about ISTA and its research undertaken there, please visit our website.