

Kootstra Talent Fellowship (KTF) – 2024

(version 2, 14/10/2024)

Goal of the Fellowship

The Kootstra Talent Fellowship (KTF) aims to foster innovative scientific research and provide young, talented researchers with the opportunity to develop into independent researchers. The KTF serves as a starting point for researchers to apply for personal grants such as the NWO-Veni or a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship.

What Can Be Requested?

Research Time

- The minimum duration of the KTF is 12 months, with a maximum duration of 24 months, or until the date a personal grant from an external funding agency takes effect, whichever comes first.
- Part-time employment (down to 0.7 FTE) is possible, with the fellowship duration extendable pro-rata.
- If the laureate already has a PhD the fellowship must commence within six months of the grant award. If the laureate has not yet obtained a PhD the fellowship must start on the day of written approval of the PhD thesis.

Financial Support

- The KTF will cover 50% of the salary costs (Scale 10-4 in the first year and, if applicable, Scale 10-5 in the second year or part thereof). The remaining 50% must be matched by the candidate's institute.
- The research institutes guarantee that the laureate can carry out the research project.
- The matching from the institute is fully contributed towards the implementation of the project.
- Exploitation costs: €6,000 per year (maximum of 2 years).

Conditions for Applicants

Who Can Apply?

1. Researchers who obtained their PhD at FHML (fully or partially) of Maastricht University after November 1st, 2022.
2. Researchers who are finalizing their PhD at FHML (fully or partially) of Maastricht University.

Please note:

- The candidate's PhD thesis must be approved by the evaluation committee before the fellowship can start. No exceptions will be allowed, and the Board will withdraw the award if this timeline is not met.
- Researchers in training as a medical specialist or 'arts-assistent niet in opleiding' who meet the above criteria can apply, with written permission from the training head required.

Extension Clause The maximum career deadline (one year post-PhD defense) can be extended by the FHML Board if the candidate has taken extended sick, parental, maternity, or care leave. The maximum extension granted is one year. For extension requests, contact the Board of the Faculty of Health Medicine and Life before submitting your grant application (grantsoffice-fhml@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Additional Terms

- Applications must be made by individual researchers, not by duos or research groups.
- Researchers already financially supported from other funding sources (0.3 FTE and up) during the KTF period are not eligible to apply.
- Researchers with a position as University Lecturer (Universitair Docent) are not eligible to apply.
- A candidate may submit a maximum of one application per round and can apply twice for a KTF. For a second application the feedback of the first application will be carefully assessed by the evaluation commission, so make sure to incorporate the feedback into the second proposal and explain this to the committee.
- Candidates who cancel for an interview, will have to go through the entire KTF procedure for the next round.
- If an application is withdrawn during the assessment process, it still counts as a 'full' submission and will count towards the maximum number of submissions per applicant.
- Researchers awarded a KTF cannot reapply.
- Funds are earmarked for the relevant candidate and cannot be transferred to others.
- A candidate can spend up to 50% of the fellowship duration abroad, though a work visit abroad is not obligatory.
- The work should be fully performed at the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (except for work visits abroad).

Application Guidelines The application deadline for the KTF 2024 round is December first, 2024. The application form is attached to this call. Applications can be submitted by email to the Grants Office of the Faculty of Health Medicine and Life (FHML) (grantsoffice-fhml@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Please ensure the scientific director of your School/Institute confirms their willingness and ability to provide the 50% matching in a supporting letter. Without this letter, your application is not eligible.

PLEASE NOTE: Each FHML Institute has an internal selection process. Candidates are encouraged to inquire about this procedure in their own School/Institute, as there may be an internal deadline prior to the KTF closing date.

The Executive Board Maastricht UMC+ decides which applicants will be awarded the KTF. The Maastricht UMC+ Research Committee (WMUMC+) acts as an advisory board in the review process. The evaluation procedure will be completed within three months of the deadline.

Criteria Eligibility of proposals will be checked upon submission (e.g., all sections must be completed within the set word limit; only applications using the 2024 form are admissible). **PLEASE NOTE:** Applications exceeding the word limit will not be considered.

All KTF proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria:

A. Quality, Innovative Character, and Academic Impact of the Proposed Research (40%)

- Original research idea
- Clarity and concreteness of the research question
- Theoretical underpinning of the research question
- Innovative character and degree of challenge (for PI and MUMC+/Institute)
- Alignment of the methodology with the research aims and questions with research plan
- Feasibility, opportunities, and obstacles in the execution of the project
- Fit with the strategy of MUMC+ and Research Institute
- Knowledge utilization (scientific, societal, and economic)

The researcher may perform part of the work abroad if this is indispensable to execute project.

B. Personal Vision and Motivation (20%)

- Clear vision of the researcher about which gap in the field is addressed with their research
- Clear link between proposed research and career vision
- Appropriateness of short-term (KTF) and long-term (follow-up trajectory) career planning in relation to the career vision

C. Academic Profile of the Researcher (40%)

- Clear indications of outstanding talent for academic research:
 - Education: supervision, teaching roles, mentoring, assessments, contributions to content or coordination of education/programs/modules, quality of education (e.g., student evaluations)
 - Research: research output (including peer-reviewed publications), productivity (e.g., output relative to work experience and actual time spent on research), recognition for work (e.g., prizes, grants, and awards, invited presentations), contributions to the research field (theoretical, methodological, clinical)
 - Impact: knowledge dissemination activities (including conference participation, public outreach) and layman publications
 - Leadership: research vision, collaborations and networking, international and/or interdisciplinary research activities, membership of boards/committees, organization of conferences/workshops, involvement in the organization of meetings, other (non-research) activities in group/institute, growth/potential towards independence

Evaluation Procedure The Executive Board Maastricht UMC+ decides which applicants will be awarded the KTF. The Maastricht UMC+ Research Committee (WMUMC+) acts as an advisory board in the review process. The evaluation procedure consists of two steps:

Step 1: Evaluation of the proposal

1. An eligibility check will be performed to ensure your proposal meets all formal criteria for submission (e.g., word count) and is complete (e.g., including requested letters). Proposals not meeting all eligibility criteria will be omitted.
2. In a preselection step, the WMUMC+ assesses all eligible proposals using the stated criteria and their weight, resulting in a mean score for each of the three evaluation criteria. All proposals will be ranked according to the likelihood of funding. Candidates with the highest rankings are invited for an interview with the WMUMC+.
3. In case of a resubmission the WMUMC+ checks if feedback from the previous round is taken in account

Step 2: Interview Round

The second step involves an interview round. During this interview, the WMUMC+ committee will have the opportunity to pose questions, and the applicant can respond and engage in discussion with the committee. This process ensures the principle of hearing and rebuttal is applied. The interview is a crucial component of the assessment and may lead to revisions in the evaluation and scoring of the application up to that point.

Scoring Criteria

During the interview, candidates are evaluated based on:

- The quality, innovative character, and academic impact of the proposed research (30%)
- Their responses to questions and the ensuing discussion with the committee (50%)
- The content and delivery of their presentation (20%)

Conflict of Interest

Members of the WMUMC+ with a conflict of interest regarding a specific KTF proposal will be excluded from the evaluation and interview process. A conflict of interest arises when a member involved in the evaluation has a personal, professional (e.g., supervisor), or organizational relationship with the applicant(s), affecting their ability to perform their role objectively and without bias.

Obligations for Grant Recipients

- Upon completion of the KTF, laureates are required to submit a final report to the Board of the FHML (grantsoffice-fhml@maastrichtuniversity.nl).
- The final report must detail which grants have been applied for and awarded. Additionally, it should address the research plan, goals, hypotheses, timeline, and finances as described in the application. This evaluation must be submitted within six months after the fellowship ends. Only then will the remaining 10% of the KTF be disbursed.
- Laureates are expected to contribute to the KTF symposium by presenting their final report.

Timeline

Submission deadline:	December 1st 2024
Review by WMUMC+:	December 18th 2024
Interviews:	January 20th 2025
Decision by Board MUMC+/FHML:	Mid 2025

Please block the interview date in your agenda. This is the only day for interviews and there will be no exceptions in case of unavailability.

More Information and where to get support

For more information and tips regarding the KTF, please refer to the guidebook.

For questions please contact Maaïke de Backer at maaïke.debacker@maastrichtuniversity.nl or the FHML/UMC+ Grants Office at grantsoffice-fhml@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Tip: ask your supervisor or scientific director for support available within the institute.

Researchers can also contact their Institutes funding advisor for support:

- Marco Berndes – m.berndes@maastrichtuniversity.nl – MHeNs
- Vivian Braeken – v.braeken@maastrichtuniversity.nl – CAPHRI, SHE
- Gwynned de Looijer – g.delooijer@maastrichtuniversity.nl – CARIM, M4I
- Frans van Nieuwpoort – frans.vannieuwpoort@maastrichtuniversity.nl – NUTRIM
- Pan Xu – pan.xu@maastrichtuniversity.nl – GROW, MERLN