



Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows

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1. Introduction

Congratulations on becoming a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow! By joining the MSCA, you are about to take your career to the next level.

As an MSCA fellow, you have rights and obligations that mostly concern your employment conditions, integrity and excellence. This document provides an overview of these as well as further information related to:

- Career development activities in addition to your research
- Supervision and career guidance
- Open Science and responsible research and innovation
- Inclusiveness and gender equality
- Communication, dissemination and exploitation
- Sustainable research and the principles of the MSCA Green Charter
- National Contact Points and other assistance and information services
- Opportunities after the fellowship
- Online resources

To fully understand your position, you should familiarise yourself with the [MSCA part for the Horizon Europe Work Programme](#), as well as the specifics of the grant agreement between the European Research Executive Agency (REA) and your host institution. You should receive a copy of the specific grant agreement for your project, together with its annexes, from the project coordinator or from your host beneficiary. That document outlines the scope and nature of the research that will be undertaken and the training that will be provided. The beneficiaries are contractually obliged to implement the project as described in the grant agreement. Each grant agreement consists of a "general grant agreement" that is essentially the same for all projects, and Annexes – Part A and Part B – which are specific to the project in question.

On the [Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal](#) you will be able to access the MSCA Work Programme and General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme (make sure that you check the version under which the grant for your project was awarded), the model grant agreement, the annotated model grant agreement that explains how each article is implemented, and other useful documentation.

Please note that this document should be read in conjunction with the Information note specific to your action accompanying this information package.

2. Your rights and obligations

Your employer is expected to support you and manage the MSCA grant in accordance with the provisions of the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#). These documents are addressed to researchers as well as to employers and funders in both the public and private sectors. They are key elements of European Union policy to make research an attractive career, by establishing some core rights and obligations.

The [European Charter for Researchers](#) should be your first reference to address issues relating to research freedom, ethical principles, professional attitude, accountability, and relations with your supervisor. The Charter also provides standards and guidance on non-discrimination, gender balance, and working conditions, as well as on intellectual property rights and other topics. The [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#) on the other hand deals with matters of recruitment and selection, such as transparency or proper recognition of qualifications and mobility experience.

For your employer, the grant agreement signed with REA contains the obligation not only to take all measures to implement the principles laid out in the Charter and the Code of Conduct, but also to inform you and all participants involved in the action about them. The employer is required to make its best effort to apply all of the principles set out in the Charter and the Code of Conduct. Some of these principles are also contractually binding, for example:

- Informing you about key elements of the grant and the allowances you are entitled to receive (namely a living allowance, mobility allowance and, if applicable, family, long-term leave and/or special needs allowances in the case of recruited researchers; a top-up allowance and if applicable, a special needs allowance in the case of seconded staff)
- Ensuring that you are adequately supervised and receive appropriate career guidance
- Providing training and the necessary means for implementing the action
- Ensuring that personalised career development plans are established, support their implementation and update in view of your needs

Your status as an MSCA fellow also carries certain obligations, for example:

- Working exclusively for the action, unless part-time work is allowed by the action and has been approved
- Informing the host organisation as soon as possible of any events or circumstances likely to affect your fellowship
- Ensuring visibility of received EU funding in communications, publications and patent applications
- Completing and submitting an evaluation questionnaire at the end of your fellowship and a follow-up questionnaire two years afterwards.

Further information on your rights and obligations can be found in the Information note specific to your action accompanying this document and in the grant agreement between the REA and your host institution.

3. Career Development Activities

In line with the [European Charter for Researchers](#), the MSCA put special emphasis on skills development and improving the career prospects of researchers.

Therefore you may undertake professional training and development activities during your fellowship, such as:

- Complementary training in transferable skills such as proposal writing, research management, open science, FAIR² data management, intellectual property rights, patent submission, innovation and entrepreneurship, communication, etc.
- Attendance of conferences and workshops to boost your competences and networking capacity
- Outreach and/or citizen engagement activities
- Teaching
- Language courses

Career development activities are complementary and should not interfere with the research element of the project.

You may also join the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#) (MCAA) to connect with other fellows. The MCAA is an international non-profit organization established and supported by the European Commission, which is governed by volunteer members and with a bottom-up approach at its core. The vibrant MCAA community brings together all career stages from all scientific disciplines, encouraging networking and cooperation, making the MCAA a forum for debate between researchers and with society. The MCAA is a major platform for researchers to contribute to shaping science policy in Europe, providing career development opportunities and supporting the wider research community on topics affecting research and researchers' lives. Participation in MCAA is free of charge.

4. Supervision and career guidance

In line with the principles set out in the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#), the MSCA promote the effective supervision of researchers. MSCA beneficiaries must ensure adequate supervision, mentoring and appropriate career guidance for researchers.

Good supervision contributes to creating a supportive environment for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers and staff to conduct their work and is of high importance for their career advancement.

Your host organisation must ensure adequate supervision or mentoring and appropriate career guidance. The grant agreement between your employer and REA contains the details of the supervision arrangements that were included in the proposal. Where supervision will also be provided by another institution, this should

be clearly specified in the grant agreement. Your supervisor(s) should also be explicitly named in your contract.

In addition, the [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#) serve as a reference for host institutions and supervisors to ensure that researchers are adequately supervised from the outset and throughout the duration of their research project.

The Guidelines provide specific recommendations for supervisors, researchers and institutions on aspects ranging from the integration of researchers, research support and career development to mentoring and wellbeing of researchers and communication and conflict resolution. They also provide guidance for the training and professional development of the supervisors themselves.

All participants are expected to adhere to these guidelines on a best-effort basis, taking into account differing situations, disciplines, levels of experience and training of researchers.

The MSCA guidelines aim to complement other initiatives and codes of practice, which exist at institutional level.

Excellent supervision includes providing support and guidance, monitoring and assessing progress, counselling on career development, raising awareness on wellbeing, providing regular feedback, and ensuring clear and open communication. If you feel that there is insufficient expertise or commitment to guide and support you in your research, you should not hesitate to voice these concerns clearly and in time to your employer (for example to your supervisor), or project coordinator

If those mentioned above cannot resolve the issue, then please contact the organisation coordinating the project, if this is different from your employer. Only in the exceptional cases where problems remain after this dialogue should you inform the relevant Project Officer at REA. The coordinator of your project will have the contact details of this person. However, please raise the matter first with your employer or project coordinator (if applicable), before contacting REA.

MSCA beneficiaries are encouraged to consider the measures set out in the MSCA Guidelines for Inclusion of Researchers at Risk in order to widen access for researchers at risk to their projects including through tailored support and career services and job search assistance in the researcher's new geographical area³. Researchers at risk include researchers, scholars and scientists at all stages of their careers who are experiencing threats to their life, liberty or research career, and those who are forced to flee or have been displaced because of such threats.

5. Open science and responsible research and innovation

The MSCA promote Open Science and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). One of the expected impacts of the four main actions of MSCA is to foster the culture of open science. Open Science is an approach based on open cooperative work and

systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process. Open Science practices include:

- Early and open sharing of research (for example through pre-registration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing)
- Research output management
- Measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs
- Providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows)
- Participation in open peer-review;
- Involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of research and innovation agendas and contents (such as citizen science).

As an MSCA fellow, you should remain aware of the most important principles of RRI, to steer research and innovation towards addressing key societal challenges and meeting the expectations of European citizens. There are six keys to RRI: Engagement of all societal actors (researchers, industry, policy-makers and the civil society), Gender Equality in human resources management and in research and innovation content, quality Science Education for the next generation of researchers, Open Access to research results of publicly-funded projects, Ethics as a basis for increased social relevance and acceptability of research, and Governance – actions to mainstream RRI principles within organisations.

In the context of RRI and good research practice in general, openness and transparency are paramount. In order to benefit society at large, the products of your work will need to be disseminated through communication and publishing in order to be exploited, as well as possibly transferred into other research settings. You might be expected to take part in your host's communication plan to ensure a high visibility of the funded research and to help maximise the impact of the results.

The MSCA explicitly support open access to research results and MSCA projects have to comply with several obligations on open science. In sum, beneficiaries/authors must:

- ensure open access to peer-reviewed scientific publications resulting from MSCA funding, depositing their publication in a trusted repository. Furthermore, provide information via the repository on outputs/tools/instruments needed to validate the conclusions of publications. Metadata of deposited publications must be open and in line with the FAIR principles;
- manage responsibly the digital research data generated in the action in line with the FAIR principles, establishing a research data management plan and ensuring open access to research data via a trusted repository. Furthermore, provide information via the repository on outputs/tools/instruments needed to re-use or validate the data. Metadata of deposited data must be open and in line with the FAIR principles;

More details on mandatory and recommended open science practices can be found in the [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#) and Annex 5 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#).

6. Inclusiveness and gender equality

In line with the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#), your MSCA project is encouraged to embrace diversity, create inclusive working conditions and take measures to promote equal opportunities for all researchers – including in recruitment, training and career development – in the implementation of the project and facilitate mobility and counter-act gender and disability related barriers to it.

In most cases, your organisation has also been required to have a Gender Equality Plan. This document is publicly available and outlines your organisation's policy when it comes to gender equality and other important aspects such as work-life balance, gender equality in recruitment and career progression, gender based-violence and the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content.

The MSCA also seek to ensure fair access to doctoral education, research training, skills development and knowledge transfer for researchers with disabilities, to stimulate an inclusive and non-discriminatory employment and research and innovation labour market participation, as well as to support their cross-border mobility experiences in the framework of the MSCA.

The MSCA address the gender pay gap and support equal opportunities through the provision of an equal pay for all fellows. As an MSCA researcher, you might also be entitled to specific benefits and conditions that facilitate work-life balance and create a gender-equal and inclusive working environment where you can thrive:

- A family allowance, if you have any family obligations or acquire them during your fellowship.
- A long-term leave allowance, in case of leave, including maternity, paternity, parental, sick or special leave, longer than 30 consecutive days.
- A special needs allowance for MSCA fellows with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment.

Further information on these allowances can be found in the Information note specific to your action accompanying this document, as well as the [MSCA Work Programme](#).

Gender is also a cross-cutting issue within Horizon Europe, meaning that as an MSCA fellow you should reflect on how your own research may have an impact on issues such as gender equality, group-based discrimination, etc. Integrating the gender and sex dimensions in your research will improve its quality as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations you will produce. Although your project or research might not have an obvious link to gender aspects, it might indirectly touch on one or more such issues. Your MSCA project might provide you with specific training and guidance on how to enhance the relevance of your research by integrating the gender dimension into it.

7. Communication, dissemination and exploitation

Beneficiaries of MSCA funding must carry out activities to increase the impact of their project research results:

- They must share research results with the scientific community, commercial players, civil society and policymakers ('dissemination').
- They must also take action to use your project results for commercial purposes, to tackle societal problems or in policymaking ('exploitation').

As a successful researcher you should also be ready to take part in promoting research as a career choice, especially to young people. Engagement with the general public helps to promote the understanding of science and is also a way for you to better understand public expectations and concerns about science and technology. The European Commission provides several opportunities to reach out to the public through the [European Researchers' Night and Researchers at Schools](#), as well as the [Science if Wonderful!](#) Exhibition and digital repository, but there are a myriad of initiatives around you that will allow you to reach out to non-specialised audiences.

You might also want to engage with the scientific community, civil society, commercial players and policy-makers and support their decision-making process by disseminating your scientific findings. Your research might fuel certain public debates and underpin societal decisions with the best scientific evidence.

Your MSCA project and organisations such as the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#) might provide you with specific training on how to convey your messages to these diverse audiences, position yourself and make your voice be heard. You might also apply to research and innovation contests and prizes to give visibility to your research. The European Union organises several prizes that reward outstanding research results and careers. Some of them include the [EU Prize for Women Innovators, the Innovation Radar Prize](#) or the [Horizon Impact Award](#).

Your MSCA project might also lead to specific results, such as publications, patents, outputs subject to intellectual property rights. The European Commission offers a number of free-of-charge services to support your dissemination and exploitation activities. You should always contact your supervisor or employer to see how to make use of such services.

- [Open Research Europe platform](#): An open access, free-of-charge publishing platform for scientific papers for Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe beneficiaries, including an open peer review and article revision.
- [Horizon Results platform](#): A platform for showcasing your research results, finding collaboration opportunities and getting inspired by the results of others.
- [Horizon Results Booster](#): Free consulting services including a portfolio dissemination and exploitation strategy, business plan development and go-to-market support.
- [European Standardisation Booster Service for EU Projects](#): supports projects to contribute to standardisation in Europe and beyond.

- [Innovation Radar](#): An initiative that identifies high-potential innovations, based on a data-driven methodology, and assists EU-funded researchers and innovators in reaching the market with their innovation.
- [Intellectual Property Helpdesk](#): Aiming to support IP capacity building along the full scale of IP practices, this initiative provides free-of-charge, first-line support to European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on IP management, protection and enforcement covering six different regions: China, Europe, India, Latin America, South-East Asia and Africa. The European IP Helpdesk additionally assists SMEs and researchers participating in EU-funded research and innovation projects in dealing with IP issues related to these specific programmes.

8. Sustainable research and the MSCA Green Charter

As the EU's flagship programme for the mobility and training of researchers, as well as the development of doctoral programmes, the MSCA is committed to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges.

The [MSCA Green Charter](#) lays down a set of general principles and objectives that promote the sustainable implementation of research activities in line with the [European Green Deal](#), the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The [MSCA Green Charter](#) constitutes a code of good practice for all recipients of MSCA funding – both individuals and institutions – and promotes the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in all aspects of project implementation. In so doing, the Charter seeks to reduce the environmental footprint of MSCA-funded projects, to raise awareness of environmental sustainability, and to serve as a catalyst in promoting best practice in sustainable research management.

All participants in MSCA-funded projects are encouraged to adhere to the Charter on a “best effort” basis, and to commit to as many of its provisions as possible during the implementation of their respective projects. Some measures individuals are invited to consider are to:

- Mainstream sustainability and environmental considerations in relevant aspects of the project's implementation, including teaching and learning
- Prevent or minimise the production of waste and harmful substances
- Prioritise low carbon forms of transportation for all project-related travel, including commuting
- Employ teleconferencing tools as a complement to physical attendance at events
- Minimise the use of energy, water, or other scarce resources in the implementation of the project

At final reporting stage, all MSCA projects will be asked to report on the ways they have sought to minimise the environmental impact of their research activities and how they applied the principles of the Green Charter.

9. Tackling research and innovation foreign interference

The European Commission attaches great importance to the issue of foreign interference in research and innovation. The Commission has therefore published a toolkit, which provides information on practices to mitigate foreign interference risks to Europe's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) in support of their endeavour to safeguard their fundamental values, including academic freedom, integrity and institutional autonomy and to protect their staff, students, research findings and assets. Accordingly, it does not intend to limit international collaboration but rather to promote international collaboration that is as open as possible and as closed as necessary. Moreover, it is not designed to burden HEIs and RPOs with additional administration but to encourage integration of possible measures as much as possible in existing structures.

10. National Contact Points and other assistance and information services

In case you need further clarification with regard to any of the aspects of your fellowship, you could contact either your supervisor or another representative of your employer, or any of the [MSCA National Contact Points](#) (NCP). NCPs are national structures which are able to provide personalised support in the local language. Many of them have a specialised Contact Point dealing with the MSCA. NCPs in different countries are in regular touch with each other, so you will be signposted to the most appropriate source of advice.

For general queries about Horizon Europe, you can contact the [Research Enquiry Service](#), which deals with questions regarding European Research, available funding instruments in the field of research and the validation process of participants.

In addition, the [European Intellectual Property Rights Helpdesk](#) offers free-of-charge support on Intellectual Property matters to beneficiaries of EU-funded research projects.

Finally, the [EURAXESS](#) portal offers access to personalised help with relocation for internationally mobile researchers, through a network of EURAXESS Service Centres located across Europe. The portal also includes a range of other services, such as information and networking for researchers working outside Europe. The portal is periodically updated to include new features, so please visit it regularly.

11. Looking ahead: Opportunities after your fellowship

For fellows coming towards the end of their MSCA fellowship and looking for the next opportunities, you will find below some ideas for opportunities after your MSCA project:

- You can join the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#) (MCAA), if not done so already, to stay connected to the wider MSCA community of alumni.
- Depending on your career stage and/or future positions, you may still be eligible to apply or participate in other MSCA actions. Have a look at the [MSCA website](#) to learn more about the five different actions.
- The [European Research Council](#) also supports excellent frontier research through different grant schemes open for researchers of any nationality, in any fields of research and at different stages of their career.
- [EURAXESS](#) portal publishes job vacancies, hosting offers and funding opportunities for researchers which could be of interest.
- For researchers with innovation or business ideas, the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) provides support for business innovation, advice as well as matchmaking services to help turn innovative ideas into concrete products or services and commercial successes.
- Similarly, the [European Institute for Innovation and Technology](#) and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities develop activities linked to entrepreneurial education, business creation, innovation projects, regional innovation, global outreach and citizen engagement, which could be of interest. Have a look at the guide [here](#) to learn more about potential opportunities.
- For researchers already looking to fund the development, deployment or scaling up of a new breakthrough technology or innovation stemming from their research results, the [European Innovation Council](#) has developed several funding schemes that could be of interest.

12. Online resources

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions website**

<http://ec.europa.eu/mscahttps://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/>

- **European Research Executive Agency website**

https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-marie-sklodowska-curie-actions/horizon-europe-msca-grants-reporting_en

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions on Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/Marie.Curie.Actions>

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions on Twitter**

<https://twitter.com/mscaactions>

- **Factsheet, Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, 2021-2027**

<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/128028>

- **Marie Curie Alumni Association**

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/>

- **Horizon Europe website**

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

- **Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

- **MSCA part of the Work Programme:** see “Work Programmes” section and “Main WP” subsection under the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/reference-documents;programCode=HORIZON>

- **HE Unit Model Grant Agreement**

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/agr-contr/unit-mga_he_en.pdf

- **General Annotated Model Grant Agreement**

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf

- **Horizon Europe Programme Guide**

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf

- **European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers**

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter/european-charter>

- **Guidelines for MSCA Supervision**

<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/508311>

- **MSCA Green Charter**

<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/720690>

- **Guidelines for inclusion of Researchers at Risk**

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b73cad36-6144-11ec-9c6c-01aa75ed71a1>

- **National Contact Points**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp>

- **Research Inquiry Service**

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/contact-us/research-enquiry-service_en

- **The European Intellectual Property Rights Helpdesk**

<https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/>

- **EURAXESS portal**

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/>

- **Horizon Dashboard**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard>

- **Become an expert evaluator**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert>

- **European Research Council**

<https://erc.europa.eu/homepage>

- **Enterprise Europe Network**

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/>

- **Synergies between the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology**

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/40f1a820-2cc2-11ed-975d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

- **European Innovation Council**

https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en

- **Toolkit on Tackling R&I Foreign Interference**

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3faf52e8-79a2-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

