



# SciLifeLab PULSE

## Program for future leaders in life science

### Guide for Applicants

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## Program Summary

The SciLifeLab PULSE (Programme for Future Leaders in Life Science) is a 60-month program funded by the EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSCA) COFUND scheme. PIs that host a PULSE postdoc receive a fixed Euro contribution for each person-month of postdoc employment, with the remainder funded through other sources. The program is coordinated by [SciLifeLab](#).

PULSE will train 48 future leaders in Life Sciences through a 3-year postdoctoral fellowship.

- The program offers two tracks: Academic and Entrepreneurial.
- Each track has 2 calls, open January-March, 2025 and 2026
- All positions are open to candidates of all nationalities according to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) eligibility criteria.

SciLifeLab PULSE has [9 Implementing partners](#): KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Karolinska Institutet, Linköping University, Lund University, Örebro University, Stockholm University, Umeå University, University of Gothenburg and Uppsala University. Each of the PULSE postdocs will be employed by one of the implementing organizations. In the call, the candidate applies with support from a SciLifeLab Group Leader/main PI affiliated to one of these universities. In addition, [24 associated partners](#) representing research infrastructures, research institutes and companies in life sciences, will contribute to postdoc training and host secondments. The PULSE projects will be pursued in one of the following research areas:

- Academic track
  - Cell & molecular biology
  - Precision medicine & diagnostics
  - Evolution & biodiversity/planetary biology
  - Epidemiology & infection biology/pandemic laboratory preparedness
- Entrepreneurial track with focus on Drug discovery and Development:
  - Machine learning
  - Therapeutic oligonucleotides
  - Display and selection technologies
  - Proximity inducing agents

The PULSE program provides postdocs with access to state-of-the-art research infrastructure platforms, and a community of world-class researchers. The program emphasizes interdisciplinary and intersectoral exchange through secondments at other institutions, providing opportunities to collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds. The program will equip postdocs with transferable skills, including science communication, sustainable leadership, and intellectual property rights, preparing them for successful careers in various sectors.

## Application Check List

Further information can be found at the PULSE website (continuously updated):

<https://www.scilifelab.se/research/pulse/>, that also has a FAQ section

(<https://www.scilifelab.se/research/pulse/faq-contacts/>). You are always welcome to

contact the PULSE program office: [pulse@scilifelab.se](mailto:pulse@scilifelab.se).

## Minimum Requirements for the Position

See section Eligibility Criteria.

### Matchmaking with SciLifeLab Group Leader/ hosting PI

The hosting PI for a PULSE postdoc is required to have a status as a SciLifeLab Group Leader. The profiles of these PIs can be browsed here: <https://www.scilifelab.se/contact/group-leaders/>. The candidate chooses a host supervisor most suitable for their project. To support candidates, and to facilitate contacts with prospective hosting labs, a portfolio of PIs interested in hosting a PULSE postdoc can be found here: <https://www.scilifelab.se/research/pulse/application/#h-matchmaking-portfolio>. Here, potential hosting PI:s have provided a description of areas where they seek collaboration with a PULSE postdoc. Please note that applicants can contact any SciLifeLab Group Leader to request their involvement as a potential host supervisor. However, no previous collaboration between the applicant and the supervisor is allowed. Applicants are encouraged to engage with supervisors, but a rationale for each contact should be specified (e.g. for scientific advice to discuss the research being proposed, to visit the lab facilities and meet the research team). The supervisor is not allowed to be involved in writing the proposal.

### Documents Required for Application

A candidate can submit one application. The application shall be written in English and must include the following documents in font Arial, 11 pt.

- Proposal (in provided template)
  - Cover letter
  - Proposal abstract
  - Project proposal, mandatory content:
    - Project plan
      - Background, main objectives, methodology, technology/expertise needs, time plan
    - Suggestions of secondment(s)
      - Each position will involve at least one secondment at a different organization than that of the hosting group.
      - No secondments are binding at the application stage
    - Description of interdisciplinary, intersectoral and international exchange
      - Project risks and plan for how they will be addressed
      - Impact and future potential of project
      - Project gender and diversity dimensions
      - Considerations for integrating open science principles
      - Communication, Outreach, and Initial Dissemination Strategy
      - Description of project alignment with the MSCA Green charter
- Ethics self-assessment (in template form, if ethical approval needed, this should be stated in application)
- Two reference letters (1 page each)
- Curriculum vitae in the Europass format, including a list of publications (max. 5 pages)

- You need to create an account and follow the instructions on the EUROPASS site: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>. When you have completed your CV, export to PDF-format for upload.
- Supporting letter from a SciLifeLab Group Leader/hosting PI

**Important note:** *Project proposals not using the provided templates or which exceed the page limit (see templates) are ineligible and will not be evaluated.*

## Application Announcement and Portal

The application starts either from the EURAXESS or PULSE website, <https://www.scilifelab.se/research/pulse/application/>. SciLifeLab's application portal, Anubis, will be used for the application process. Anubis is a secure and robust portal that complies with GDPR requirements.

You need to register for an account in Anubis to be able to submit your PULSE proposal. To create an account on Anubis, visit <https://anubis.scilifelab.se/user/register> and complete the registration process. Accounts are approved automatically if your email is associated with a Swedish university or institution; otherwise, approval is handled manually by administrators and may take a few days.

For applicants using email addresses not affiliated with a university or recognized institution, please enter "**PULSE-2025**" along with your institution in the affiliation field. This will ensure your account is approved by the administrators.

All required documents (downloadable from Anubis) need to be finalized before upload in the application portal. After you have submitted your application ("save and submit"), you will receive an email submission receipt, with a link to your submitted proposal (*please also check your spam folder*). A proposal may be edited and re-submitted while the call is open. This may be useful if errors need to be corrected, or other adjustments need to be made. No changes are possible after the application deadline.

**GDPR information.** The information you provide in Anubis will be processed by the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 ("dataskyddsförordningen") on the protection of natural persons about the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

*We strongly recommend preparing and submitting your PULSE application well in advance of the call deadline, if possible.*

## Timeline of First Call

- **January 7, 2025:** The first call opens
- **March 31, 2025:** Application deadline
- **April 1 – June 30:** Evaluation of written applications, interviews by external and internal panels, final selection
- **October 1, 2025:** Start of employment

## Eligibility Criteria

Submitted applications are checked for eligibility by the PULSE team.

- Strict adherence to the MSCA mobility rule is required: the researcher must not have lived or conducted their main activities (such as work or studies) in Sweden for more than twelve months during the three years immediately preceding the application deadline. An **eligibility time calculator** is available on the PULSE website.
- Applicants must be in possession of a doctoral degree, awarded no more than 3 years before the application deadline (with accepted exemptions for deducible time, e.g. compulsory national service, medical and parental leaves of absences, time expended obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention). Applicants who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered eligible to apply.
- A complete application package submitted through the PULSE application portal.
- Postdoc should be available for employment, ready to start at or near the announced starting date of October 1, 2025.
- Please note that personal mobility rule information must be provided to MSCA through-out the program, in case of MSCA audit.

*More information on COFUND postdoctoral programmes can be found here:*

*<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/actions/cofund>*

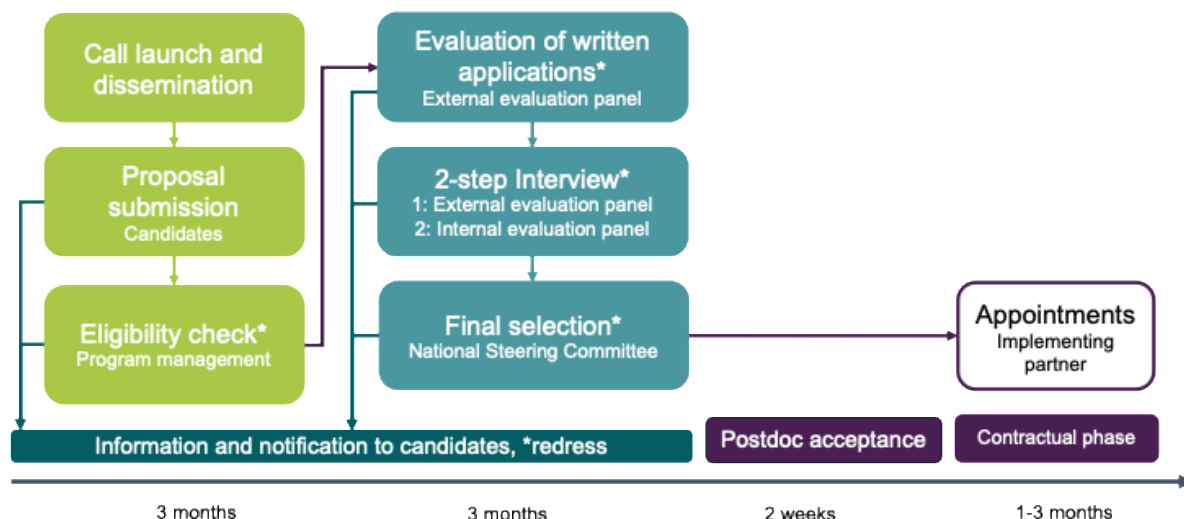
*There are a few exceptions to the MSCA mobility rules if you have refugee status or are in a situation designated by the EU as special.*

## Selection Process

The selection process is a three-stage process that involves international panels of experts using an **open, fair, transparent, and merit-based** evaluation.

**The three stages of the selection process are:**

1. **Written Proposal Evaluation:** Evaluation by three external international evaluators.
2. **Interview 1 (online):** Evaluation by a panel consisting of:
  - Two external international experts (different from those who evaluated the written proposal).
  - One SciLifeLab expert (academic or entrepreneurial track).
  - One HR expert.
  - One independent observer.
3. **Interview 2 (online):** Evaluation by a panel consisting of:
  - The proposed PULSE postdoc PI.
  - One representative from the host department.
  - One research area expert from DDD (entrepreneurial track) or SciLifeLab (academic track).
  - One independent observer.



Overview of PULSE call, evaluation and and selection timeline.

Please see <https://www.scilifelab.se/research/pulse/guidelines/#h-for-evaluators> for a detailed description of the evaluation and selection process.

## Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation is based on criteria adapted from the MSCA-PF (Excellence, Impact, Implementation). Details of the criteria for each stage are as follows:

## Scoring and Thresholds

- Each criterion is scored on a scale of 0 (insufficient) to 5 (excellent).
- A scoring system with open-ended questions is used.
- The average evaluation score is calculated for each selection step.
- Applicants with a total average score of  $\geq 4$  will be invited to the next step.
- The final evaluation score weighting:
  - Written research proposal: 45%
  - Interview 1: 35%
  - Interview 2: 20%.

## Funding Decision

- The PULSE National Steering Committee makes the final funding decision based on the ranking list.
- Gender, distribution of postdocs among Implementing Partners, and preference for candidates from the EU's widening countries and third countries may be considered in funding decisions for equally ranked applications.

## Composition of Selection Panels

- Selection panels are composed of international experts with relevant academic or entrepreneurial experience. These comprise approximately 100 external international and independent experts

- The composition will ensure diversity in gender, age, geographical origins, and scientific fields.
- Selection panel members will sign a confidentiality agreement and a declaration confirming no conflicts of interest with the candidates or projects they will be evaluating

## **Redress Process**

- Each decision stage can be followed by a redress process.
- The redress process is handled by the PULSE Management Group and a neutral Ombudsman.
- The decision made during redress is final.

## **Equal Opportunities**

PULSE partners are committed to **equal opportunities and diversity** and adhere to the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Key points:

- Welcoming postdocs regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, disability, origin, religion, sexual orientation, language, political opinion, or economic condition.
- Providing additional support to adapt application conditions for candidates with disabilities or special needs.
- Promoting gender equality and diversity in all activities.
- Ensuring work-life balance in career development plans.
- Targeting diverse groups in call dissemination and briefing evaluators to ensure fair evaluation.
- Offering training on unconscious gender bias for evaluators and postdocs.
- Highlighting efforts and achievements regarding gender and diversity.

## **Ethical Guidelines/Issues**

- All applicants must submit an ethics self-assessment using the EC template.
- Projects requiring ethical approval can only start after approval is received and reported to the PULSE Management Group.
- Ethical approval processes are handled according to Swedish regulations.

## **Employment Conditions**

PULSE postdocs are employed by their host university and receive competitive salaries and benefits.

Key aspects:

- 36-month employment contracts.
- Competitive, gender-neutral gross salary of at least 38,000 SEK/month (approximately 3,378 EUR) exclusive of social costs and overhead.
- Additional benefits provided by the host university, including paid vacation, health and fitness benefits, and Swedish language courses.
- Social benefits paid by the employer according to Swedish law.

## **Training and Career Development**

PULSE offers a comprehensive [training and career development program](#) based on a personalized career development plan (PCDP), developed by the PULSE postdoc

together with their supervisors and the Training and Career Development Committee (TCDC). **Key Features:**

- **Core research skills training:** Provided by the hosting institution.
- **Advanced research skills training:** Offered eg in cutting edge technologies during project (locally and/or via SciLifeLab) and through secondments
- **Transferable skills training:** Provided program wide.
- **Secondments:** Mandatory 3-6 month placement (or up to 12 months) at a PULSE partner organization.
- **Short research visits:** Optional visits to relevant institutions worldwide (up to 4 weeks).
- **Conferences:** Participation in at least two international and three national conferences.
- **Mentoring:** Individualized career guidance from assigned mentors.

### PULSE Training Objectives

- Provide core research skills and experience.
- Provide skills in cutting-edge science, technologies, and methodologies.
- Provide skills in data management, Open Science, and FAIR principles.
- Foster an interdisciplinary, intersectoral, and international network.
- Equip postdocs with transferable skills for leadership in Life Science research.
- Provide skills in innovation and translational research.

### Contact Information

The PULSE program office is available via [pulse@scilifelab.se](mailto:pulse@scilifelab.se), responsible for answering all technical and administrative queries within 48 working hours.