



Netherlands Initiative for Education Research

Call for proposals

Postdocs in educational science Programme council for fundamental education research (PROO)

2016

Inhoud

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (Dutch acronym: NRO) coordinates and funds educational research and enhances the connection between academic research and educational practice. In this way, NRO contributes to innovation and improvement of education.

The NRO is part of the Netherlands Organisation of Scientific Research (NWO).

There are four types of research programmes at the NRO, each with its own programme council: practice-oriented, fundamental, policy-oriented and overarching. The overarching programme intersects with the three other programmes. This Call for Proposals falls under the responsibility of the Programme council for fundamental education Research (Programmaraad voor het Onderwijsonderzoek, or PROO) of the NRO.

Sphere of activity

The PROO funds scientific research in the Netherlands in the areas of primary education, general secondary education, preliminary, secondary and higher vocational education, academic education and teacher trainings. This concerns fundamental research into policy and practice of education on the (medium)long term, in which the focus is on questions of elucidation.

This Call for Proposals provides an overview of the application procedure for a grant, and the assessment and selection thereof, in the framework of fundamental education research.

1.2 Available budget

The available budget for the grant scheme Postdocs in education sciences is 450.000 euro in total. For each application a maximum of € 150.000 is available.

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

This call for proposals is valid up to and including the closing date for submitting complete proposals on the 12th of April, 2016, 14:00 hours (CET).

2 Aim

The round 'Postdocs in education sciences' targets promising researchers, who have recently received their PhD, are at the beginning of their academic career, and who, on the basis of their scientific qualities, have the potential to become important figures in educational science.

Education sciences encompasses all disciplines (and combinations thereof) that aim to develop the knowledge that is relevant for education policy and practice on the micro (individual and classroom), meso (education organization) and macro (policy and system) level. Examples of these disciplines are: educational science, pedagogy, teaching/didactics, economics, sociology, cognitive neuroscience, psychology, public administration, ethics and law.

Researchers who recently received their PhD are offered the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and experience during a stay of maximally two years at a Dutch university or a research institute of KNAW or NWO, other than the institute from which they received their PhD. Researchers can acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and experience for their future scientific career.

This grant scheme targets educational research. There is no specific programmatic theme. The only condition is that the research falls within the domain of the programme council (see paragraph 1.1). This means that beforehand no disciplines are excluded.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Researchers who have graduated and are currently working on a PhD project or have already received their PhD, maximally one year ago at the application deadline, can submit an application.

To be eligible for the selection procedure, candidates have to meet the criteria listed below:

- a) The date of the formal PhD award of the applicant was no more than 12 months before the submission deadline of April 12, 2016.
- b) Candidates still working on their PhD can only submit an application if their promotor approved the thesis and confirms this by means of a written statement along with the application. One can start with the research as soon as the date of promotion has been decided, but at the latest the postdoc research has to start 1 November 2016.
- c) In the five years directly preceding the submission deadline, the applicant did research at an academic research institute for a period equivalent to minimally three years fulltime.
- d) The applicant is not allowed to apply for a grant to stay at the same institute as where he/she conducted his/her PhD-research.
- e) The applicant may, on the day of the submission deadline, after the PhD track (the defense did not have had to take place yet), have conducted scientific research at the prospective host institution, but only for a maximum period equivalent to six months fulltime.

In this round, applicants can apply only once. If the PROO decides to continue this program, applicants from the current round will not be excluded from participation in a next round, provided they meet the criteria.

Members of the assessment committee cannot also be applicants in the same round.

3.1.1 Extension clause

The maximum application term of one year after the PhD defense date can be extended by NRO if the candidate has taken extended sick, parental, maternity or care leave within the relevant period. Extension may also be possible if the candidate has combined a part-time research appointment with care responsibilities. The maximum period of one year after the defense can be extended with maximally one year, thus researchers can apply until maximally two years after the defense date. If the applicant wants to be considered for this extension clause, he/she has to send a request to NRO before submitting the application. The request can be send via e-mail to proo@nro.nl until, at the latest, two weeks before the deadline for the letter of intent.

3.2 What can be applied

Candidates can apply for a stay of at least 12 months and no longer than 24 months at a Dutch research institute on the basis of a fulltime employment, either at a university or at an NWO or KNAW institute. The research has to be conducted in a continuous period and at one host institute.

The following institutions are eligible as a host institution:

- a) Dutch universities;
- b) NWO and KNAW institutes;
- c) The Netherlands Cancer Institute;
- d) The Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen;
- e) NCB Naturalis in Leiden;
- f) Advanced Research Centre for NanoLithography (ARCNL).

An applicant can exclusively apply for funding for:

- Staffing costs: 12 to 24 months fulltime for a postdoc researcher (on the basis of a fulltime employment for a starting senior academic employee (Sen.wet.medewerker), see: www.nwo.nl/salaristabellen);
- Material costs to maximally € 5.000, including costs for knowledge utilization;
- (Mandatory) €3.000 for publication in Open Access journals;
- (Mandatory) €5.000 for the personal benchfee.

Staffing costs

For the staffing costs of the postdoc researcher, the by NWO and VSNU agreed upon Agreement on the Funding of Academic Research (Akkoord bekostiging wetenschappelijk onderzoek; www.nwo.nl/salaristabellen) applies, including the corresponding most recent salary rates. The previously mentioned agreement started on 1 July 2008, is valid up to and including 30 June 2009 and is extended every year for at least a year, unless NWO or VSNU terminates the agreement by means of letter of termination at least six months prior to the end date.

Candidates are not permitted to appoint additional research personnel and they need permission of NWO to be able to appoint other personnel.

Material costs

The direct material costs consist of the general material costs, costs for knowledge utilisation and costs for internationalisation. Costs for infrastructure (housing and ICT facilities) and other overhead are not eligible for remuneration.

The submitted budget will be assessed by NWO.

Remunerations for material costs are for example the costs for:

- procuring special equipment and consumables needed for the research;
- conducting surveys, experiments and test research, and observation;
- the procurement of databases;
- costs associated with the dissemination of research results and knowledge transfer.

Material costs should be accounted for both financially and substantively.

The following costs are not eligible for funding, unless the research requires the use of facilities that demonstrably exceeds normal use:

- costs of equipment, consumables or administrative or technical assistance are part of the normal facilities package of a research institute
- costs for the use of computers at university computing centers or for the use of laboratories.

Only costs resulting directly from the research are eligible for funding. Therefore, no housing, overhead, maintenance and depreciation costs may be funded from the budget.

Benchfee

Applicants are awarded a personal benchfee. This is a set amount for the costs related to the stimulation of the scientific career of the researcher (for example a conference visit). The benchfee is € 5.000.

Costs for attending conferences are covered by the benchfee and cannot exceed the benchfee.

Knowledge utilisation

The NRO, along with NWO and others, believes it is important for scientific knowledge and skills to be disseminated and utilised outside the academic domain or in other academic disciplines, in other words: to stimulate knowledge utilisation.

Costs for knowledge utilisation are for example:

- costs for developing a brochure, checklist, app, website, test or teaching materials (design, printing, images, editorial work);
- costs for organising a meeting for a (specific) group to present the results.

In the manual 'knowledge utilisation fundamental education research' (Handleiding kennisbenutting fundamenteel onderwijsonderzoek) a more elaborate description can be found of what is expected of the researcher in the area of knowledge utilisation, and of the support that NRO can provide in this process. The manual can be downloaded via the following link: <http://www.nro.nl/kennis-verspreiden/handleidingen-kennisbenutting> (only available in Dutch).

Open Access

All scientific publications resulting from research that is funded by grants derived from this call for proposals are to be immediately (at the time of publication) freely accessible worldwide (Open Access). There are several ways for researchers to publish Open Access. A detailed explanation regarding Open Access can be found on www.nwo.nl/openscience-en.

Applicants are required to reserve €3,000 in their budget to publish open access. This is sufficient for about two publications.

If researchers wish to spend more than €3,000 on Open Access publications, it is possible to apply for an additional amount of maximum €6,000 from NWO. See: <http://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/our-funding-instruments/nwo/incentive-fund-open-access/incentive-fund-open-access---publications/incentive-fund-open-access---publications.html>

Financing

The payment of staff and material costs will be according to the instalments specified in the award letter. The last instalment will be paid after approval of the final report and the financial accounts.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The closing date for submitting letters of intent is Tuesday **29 March 2016**, 14:00h (CET).

The closing date for submitting applications is Tuesday **12 April 2016**, 14:00h (CET).

Applications that are submitted after the deadline will not be included in the procedure.

3.4 Preparing the letter of intent

In the letter of intent, the title of the research and the name of the applicant should be stated. Also, a short summary of the prospective research, including the name of the prospective host institution has to be provided. The letter of intent should be submitted and processed via ISAAC. There is no separate form available for this.

The letter of intent is not a selection instrument, but it cannot differ too much from the detailed application. Only the title and summary may be changed.

3.5 Preparing the application

- Download the application form from the electronic application system ISAAC or from NWO's website (at the bottom of the grant page for this programme).
- Fill in the application form.
- Save the form as a PDF file and upload it to ISAAC.

The application (to be filled in in the application form) contains a proposal in English that describes the research to be conducted (max. 6 pages A4, 2000 words, including footnotes, figure captures and tables), a CV of the applicant (max. 3 pages A4), and a publication list and should be accompanied by two recommendation letters and one letter of acceptance from the prospective host institute. Candidates that did not complete their PhD yet also need to attach the signed manuscript approval form.

The application form and forms for the recommendation letters, the letter from the host institute and the manuscript approval form will be made available on the grant page of the funding scheme before the deadline.

3.6 Specific conditions

The grant is meant for acquiring knowledge and experience by conducting postdoctoral research and not for obtaining a degree at a university.

The research has to start maximally three months after the grant has been awarded and it has to be conducted at *one* host institute. Depending on the nature of the research, data acquisition or field research can be done from the host institute. In case of early termination, NRO decides if the grant –in full or partially– has to be refunded. The research has a minimal duration of 12 months and a maximum duration of 24 months on the basis of fulltime employment. The research has to take place in a continuous period.

3.6.1 Employment

The host institute should state in the letter of invitation that it is willing to offer the applicant facilities for at least the duration of the research, and that it shall employ the laureate. The grant does not constitute a contract of employment with NWO.

A project may be conducted on a part-time basis provided that the time the researcher devotes to it amounts to at least 75% of the normal 40-hour working week. If less than 100% of the time is devoted to research then the grant shall be proportionately reduced or the grant period extended in accordance with the percentage reduction in the working hours. For example, if someone applies for a project of 24 months fulltime, the project may also be conducted in 30 months for 0,8fte. If one wants to complete the project in 24 months working 0,75fte the grant amount will be equal to 18 months fulltime.

Researchers are not allowed to receive any funding from other sources for this research project. Researchers who expect to receive other funding should contact the NRO.

3.6.2 NWO Regulation on Granting

To the extent not provided in the Call for Proposals, the NWO Regulation on Granting (version 1 December 2015) applies.

3.7 Submitting a letter of intent and an application

A letter of intent and an application can only be submitted to NWO via the online application system ISAAC. Letters of intent and applications not submitted via ISAAC will not be considered. A principal applicant must submit his/her letter of intent and application via his/her own ISAAC account. If the principal applicant does not have an ISAAC account yet, he/she must create this at least one day before applying. This is to insure that any registration problems can be resolved on time. If the principal applicant already has an account at NWO, he/she does not need to create a new account to submit a new letter of intent and application.

Letters of intent and applications should be written in English. In ISAAC we will ask you, however, to also give a Dutch summary of the research. This summary will be published on the NRO website if the grant is awarded.

When you submit your application to ISAAC you need to enter several additional details online. Make sure you allow enough time for this.

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see Section 5.1.2.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The assessment procedure comprises the following steps:

- Publication of the Call for Proposals
- Submitting letters of intent
- Submitting applications
- Processing the applications
- Preadvice by committee members
- Rebuttal by the applicant
- Meeting of the assessment committee
- Program council decision

The NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process

(see <http://www.nwo.nl/en/documents/nwo/legal/nwo-code-of-conduct-on-conflicts-of-interest>).

NWO gives all full proposals a qualification. The applicant is informed of this qualification when the decision about whether or not to award funding is announced. For further information about the qualifications

see: <http://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding+process+explained/nwo+qualification+system> .

Applications must be rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' by the committee to be eligible for a grant. Also, all criteria must be rated at least as 'good' in order to qualify for grant award.

The NRO may decide to apply a pre-selection procedure if the number of submitted applications is larger than four times the number of proposals that can be awarded funding within the available budget.

Submitting letters of intent and applications

Applicants must submit a letter of intent via ISAAC in a timely manner. Submitting a letter of intent via ISAAC is a requirement. Receipt of this will be confirmed to the applicant. Letters of intent will not be used as selection-instruments. Applicants will be notified about the number of submitted letters of intent.

Only researchers who submitted a letter of intent may submit a full proposal (see Sections 3.3 and 3.6 for the deadline and an explanation of how a letter of intent and application should be submitted). After receipt of the full proposal, the applicant will receive a conformation of this.

Processing the applications

Within two weeks of receipt of the application the applicant will be informed about whether or not it will be processed. The NRO bureau determines this based on a number of administrative criteria. These are provided in Section 4.3.1. An application that does not meet one of these criteria will not be processed.

The assessment committee's assessment and advice

Since applications of quite limited amounts are being assessed in this funding round, it was decided to make use of the option to follow a different selection procedure regarding the advisory, assessment, and decision components (see Article 2.2.5 of the NWO Regulation on Granting, version 1st of December, 2015). This deviation implies that the assessment procedure will be carried out without external referees.

Preadvice by the committee members

Each application is submitted for comments to at least two members of the assessment committee (the preliminary advisers). They provide substantive and substantiated comments on the proposal (preliminary advice). They formulate this on the basis of the assessment criteria in Section 4.3.2, for which they use a standardised form. The programme council establishes an assessment committee to assess the applications. The members of the assessment committee are chosen based on their expertise, and may not be involved with the applicants or with the applications on which they provide advice.

Rebuttal

The applicant receives the anonymised preliminary advices on his or her application and is given a week's time to formulate a rebuttal in ISAAC. If the tenor of the preliminary advice is mostly negative, the applicant is urged to withdraw the application. Experience has shown that the probability of a positive assessment in the case of predominantly negative preliminary advice is generally very small. If the applicant decides to withdraw the application he/she must notify the NRO-secretariat in writing as soon as possible.

Meeting of the assessment committee

The assessment committee will discuss the application, the preliminary advices and the applicant's rebuttal and will prepare a written report on the quality of the application for the programme council on the basis of the assessment criteria. If multiple applications received the highest qualification (either 'excellent' or 'very good'), the committee will prioritise the applications.

Program council decision

The advice of the assessment committee is reviewed and discussed by the programme council. Subsequently, the programme council determines the final qualifications and decides which applications will be awarded funding. After the decision by the program council has been made, the applicants will be informed about the result of the assessment of their application as soon as possible.

In addition to the quality of the application, the program council may also take the following policy considerations into account in its decision:

- Budgetary considerations;
- A balanced distribution of proposals across the various themes.

Objection and appeal

Formal objections against decisions in the context of the Postdocs in Educational Science funding round can be made in accordance with the applicable objection and appeal procedures.

Timetable

January 2016	Publication Call for Proposals
March 29 th , 2016	Deadline for submitting letters of intent
April 12 th , 2016	Deadline for submitting full proposals
End of April, 2016	Secretariat confirms processing of the application and notifies the applicants

May 2016	Preparation of preliminary advice by the assessment committee
Start of June, 2016	Deadline rebuttal
End of June / start of July, 2016	Meeting by the assessment committee
July 2016	Decision by the program council

4.2 After grant award

The funding will be granted to the main applicant and fully disbursed to the host institute of the main applicant. The payment of all costs ought to happen according to the instalments as specified in the award letter.

Start within three months

Research that has been awarded funding must start within three months after award and lasts at least 12 months and at most 24 months on the basis of a full-time appointment. The main applicant is expected to immediately inform NRO in case of unforeseen events that may have an adverse effect on research progress or delivery of the output. Although the main applicant is responsible for finding a solution, the NRO will provide required support if necessary.

Completion

Towards the end of the project, NRO's knowledge utilisation officer will contact the main applicant to further elaborate on the knowledge dissemination plan as included in the grant application.

Final report

Within three months after the end of the grant period, the main applicant must submit a final report and financial account via ISAAC. The final report describes the research process and research publications. Additionally, all academic output and other results that have been specified in the application and have been obtained in the framework of the project thus far must be submitted separately in ISAAC. After approval of the final report the grant period is closed and the final grant is determined.

Completion

The NRO monitors progress and evaluates the results of the funded research in relation to the indicated time schedule and envisaged results. If the NRO observes significantly lower returns, it reserves the right to apply sanctions as specified on awarding funding.

The programme council can only adopt the content of the research if the output of the research project is available. If the delivery of research output is delayed due to force majeure, the programme council will give the main applicant the opportunity to deliver the research output within a reasonable period of time. This will postpone the adoption and financial completion of the project.

If there is no force majeure and the main applicant does not deliver the research output within the prescribed period, the research will be adopted on the basis of the final report. In that case the research will be considered as not having been successfully completed. This may result in the final grant instalment not being paid.

Presentation

The NRO will regularly hold meetings at which all the research projects that have been granted by the four programme councils will be presented. Those carrying out research funded by PROO are expected to contribute to this.

4.3 Criteria

4.3.1 Formal criteria for processing applications

The NRO bureau verifies whether the application meets the following submission criteria:

- Has the application been submitted via ISAAC in time?
- Has the letter of intent been submitted?
- Does the application concern the field of educational research and the field of research of PROO?
- Has the application been submitted by an individual researcher, and not by a research couple or (research) group?
- Has the application been submitted via the ISAAC account of the main applicant?
- Is the main applicant involved in a maximum of one application in the present funding round?
- Does the main applicant meet the criteria as specified in Section 3.1?
- Does the host institute meet the criteria as specified in Section 3.2?
- Have the letter of intent and the application been prepared in English?
- Has the compulsory application form been used for the application?
- Have all questions been answered?
- Has the maximal number of words not been exceeded anywhere (description of the application: max. 6 pages A4, 2000 words, including footnotes, figure notes, and tables; CV of the applicant: max 3 pages A4)?
- Has the budget been prepared according to the guidelines in the Call for Proposals?
- Is the period for which the grant is applied at least 12 months and at most 24 months on the basis of a full-time appointment?
- Will the research be carried out during a continuous period of time?
- Will the research be carried out in one host institute? Dependent on the type of research, data collection or field research may be executed from the host institute if necessary.
- Have two recommendation letters and one acceptance letter from the intended host institute been added to the application?
- Has a form stating the approval of the dissertation been added if the candidate has not completed a PhD yet?

Only applications meeting these conditions will be admitted by NRO to the assessment procedure.

4.3.2 Criteria for assessing applications

All applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria: quality of the applicant, quality of the proposal, quality of the host institute and knowledge utilisation. These criteria will weigh 40%, 30%, 20% and 10%, respectively, in the final assessment.

1. Quality of the applicant (40%)
 - Is the candidate among the best members of his or her generation in the relevant field of study? Evidence for this will be sought in the CV, including publications (number and quality), the motivation, the two letters of recommendation, and the acceptance form from the host institute.
2. Quality of the proposal (30%)
 - Is the proposed research innovative and challenging, and does it contribute to the field of study in an original manner?
 - Is the central research question original, and have the research questions and elaboration of the problem been clearly described, defined and elaborated?
 - Are the proposed methods and design effective and suitable to answer the research questions?
 - What are the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the plan of action? Is the length of the visit proportional to the planned work?
3. Suitability of the host institute (20%)
 - What is the quality of the institutional embedding? Does the host institute, including the research group and direct supervisor, offer a stimulating research environment for the applicant (expertise, reputation)? Does the host institute possess good facilities for academic research? The quality of the host institute will be considered in relation to the proposed research. The mobility of the applicant plays an important role in the assessment of submitted applications.
4. Knowledge utilisation (10%)
 - What is the relevance of the results and/or insights from this research for education policy and practice and what does it contribute to the solution of challenges faced in educational policy and practice?

Only applications rated as 'very good' 'or excellent' are eligible for a grant. All criteria must at least be rated as 'good' in order to qualify for grant award.

5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about Postdocs in Educational Science and this Call for Proposals please contact:

- Ms. Renée Middelburg MSc
t: +31 (0)70 344 0510, e: r.middelburg@nwo.nl
- Ms. Liesbet de Haas MSc
t: +31 (0)70 344 0957, e: l.dehaas@nwo.nl
- PROO Secretariat
t: +31 (0)70 349 4343, e: proo@nro.nl

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system ISAAC

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the ISAAC manual before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk is available from Monday to Friday from 10.00 to 17.00 hours on +31 900-696 47 47. Unfortunately not all foreign phone companies support calls to a 0900 number in the Netherlands. You can also send your question by e-mail to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will receive a reply within two working days.

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