



Programme Information

Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Awards

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation grants about 20 Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Awards annually, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, to internationally renowned academics from abroad in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments in research to date and their exceptional promise for the future.

Academics can be nominated for the award if their accomplishments in research to date have earned them recognition as internationally outstanding specialist researchers, and if they are expected to continue producing cutting-edge academic achievements and have a lasting impact beyond their area of specialisation.

Academics from abroad, regardless of their discipline or nationality, may be nominated for a Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award, **provided that they have received their doctoral degree within the past 18 years**. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation particularly encourages the nomination of qualified female academics.

In addition, award winners are invited to conduct a research project of their own choosing in Germany in close collaboration with a specialist colleague. The project duration of six to twelve months may be divided into segments.

The award amount totals 45,000 EUR. In Germany, research awards are generally exempt from income tax under German tax law. In addition, further expenditures (such as travel or language courses) are covered in the context of the invitation to stay in Germany for research purposes. For more details please refer to [General Regulations and Information for Research Awards of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation](#).

Nomination Entitlement

An established academic who is employed by a university or research institution in Germany must take the initiative to nominate a candidate for the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award. Nominations may also be initiated by award winners of the Humboldt Foundation working abroad, provided that the nomination is made jointly with a colleague working in Germany. Self-nomination is not possible.

Nomination Prerequisites

The nominee's outstanding academic qualification must be internationally recognised and

documented by corresponding successes in research, such as positively received academic publications or previous awards.

The Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award can only be granted once to any one academic. Researchers who have already received an award for their academic achievements from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation are not eligible to be nominated.

Furthermore, the nominee should not have recently won any awards or fellowships in Germany for his or her academic achievements. At the time of nomination, the nominated candidate must have been predominantly living and working abroad for at least five years. Moreover, the nominee must not have held or accepted an offer of permanent employment in Germany prior to the selection date. In cases of doubt, please contact the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in advance.

Nominating academics must guarantee that they can provide the necessary infrastructure for the award winner's own research projects or lecture tours (e.g. access to libraries, materials, facilities). German hosts are also expected to be well prepared for the award winner's research stay and to act as his or her personal mentor (e.g. finding accommodation).

Selection Procedure

An independent Selection Committee appointed by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation meets twice a year, in spring and autumn, to decide on the nominations in the respective round. Reviewing an application takes approximately six months. Nominations may be submitted online at any time. Visit the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's website for further information on the [online nomination process and all necessary documents](#) as well as access to the online nomination system. A confirmation or receipt will be issued after the application has been submitted.

Nominators are responsible for ensuring that their documents are complete. Incomplete nominations might be excluded from the selection procedure.

General Regulations

The research award recognises the entire academic record as well as the personality of outstanding academics. Therefore it is assumed that award winners have complied with the [rules of good scientific practice](#) and the relevant laws valid at the respective research location in their previous academic work and will comply with them during a possible research stay in Germany. For further details please refer to section D of the [General Regulations and Information for Research Award of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation](#).

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