Call for Nominations—BFS Starting Grant—Prequalification

This programme is open to all departments and faculties at the University of Bergen aiming to recruit young national or international candidates with outstanding academic merit and research potential.

The foundation’s goal is to attract highly talented young scholars from all disciplines to the University of Bergen (UiB) and to give them a particularly good framework and conditions to help them realise their potential to achieve international excellence. In this way, the programme aims to contribute to the recruitment and development of excellent leaders in various fields of research at UiB.

The BFS Starting Grant Programme aims to

- give excellent young researchers the chance to develop into successful research leaders by providing long-term funding
- aid UiB in attracting and retaining excellent young scholars in research areas in line with UiB’s strategies and priorities and where the university foresees recruitment needs within the next four years

The nominating faculty is required to announce a permanent faculty position within the grantees’ field of research, before the end of the 4-year project period.

**BFS now calls for proposals for four-year grants beginning in 2020**

Cross-disciplinary project proposals and proposals from all disciplines are welcome, if they correspond to the research strategies and recruitment needs at UiB.

BFS encourages the university to nominate candidates currently based outside of Norway.

The programme aims to prepare successful grantees for further career development, for example by obtaining competitive research funding such as ERC Starting Grant, ERC Consolidator Grant or equivalent national and international research funding.

**Eligibility:** Nominations may be put forward only by faculties at UiB. Candidates who hold a permanent position as an associate professor or professor at UiB are not eligible for nomination. A candidate cannot be nominated two consecutive years.

Normally, candidates must be 40 years or younger on 15 March 2019. However, the age limit can be exceeded by up to two (2) years in the following circumstances or a combination thereof:

- parental leave: the age limit may be exceeded by the actual amount of leave taken for each child born before or after the award of the PhD
- long-term illness or clinical training or national service: the age limit may be exceeded by the documented amount of leave taken after the award of the PhD

**Further information:** For further details about the programme and how to apply, please see Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

**Application deadline**

Prequalification applications must be submitted by **15 March 2019**.

(For further information on how to apply and evaluation criteria, see Appendix 2.)

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1 More than ninety days for the candidate or a close family member (child, spouse, parent or sibling).
Appendix 1 – About the Stating Grant Programme

A programme for UiB departments and faculties

The purpose of the BFS Starting Grant Programme is to aid departments and faculties at UiB in recruiting excellent young researchers. BFS invites all faculties at UiB to nominate candidates. Acknowledgement of the recruitment purpose of BFS Starting Grants is an important prerequisite for funding. Nominations should thus be grounded in a need—identified by the nominating faculty—for recruitment in the applicable subject area by the end of the project period. Any BFS funding shall be a contribution towards the university's priorities and identified recruitment needs.

The nominating faculty must commit to the following should their candidate succeed in the competition:

- To co-fund the project as budgeted in the application
- To employ the successful candidate in a relevant temporary position from the project start date
- To employ other temporary project staff funded by the grant from the foundation
- To organise and conduct an external evaluation of the project and a competence assessment of the project leader before the end of the project period
- To announce a permanent faculty position within the candidate's field of research before the end of the 4-year project period.

A programme for talented young scholars

The programme aims to recruit young, talented, ambitious researchers who desire to build and lead a research group. Candidates cannot be employed in a permanent position at UiB at the application deadline, but they may hold positions at other institutions nationally or internationally. For detailed information about how to apply, please see Appendix 2.

Only candidates nominated by a faculty at UiB may apply for funding under the BFS Starting Grant Programme. Proposals should be prepared by the nominee in close cooperation with the host department and/or faculty, and be submitted by the application deadline as stated in the call for nominations.
Appendix 2 – How to apply and evaluation criteria

Two-step submission and selection process

Step 1: Prequalification
The nominee must prepare a prequalification application in English containing the following:
(See call page for template downloads)

- Cover page in line with the BFS template
- Project description of up to three (3) A4 pages describing the candidate, the research project and the research environment in which the project will be hosted
- Budget in line with the BFS template
- CV of up to three (3) A4 pages listing the candidate’s most important and relevant publications

A commitment letter from the host faculty in accordance with the BFS template must accompany the application.

Step 2: Final proposal and interview
After the prequalification, and based upon peer review of the applications, a limited number of candidates will be invited to submit full applications and final budget proposals. The foundation may interview the finalist's host departments regarding their plans for the recruitment of candidates with outstanding academic merit and research potential after the results of the prequalification have been announced. A minimum of one month will be given for candidates to prepare the final proposal. The foundation will invite candidates whose proposals reach step 2 to an interview.

Evaluation criteria

International peer review is the basis for funding decisions, with attention given to the following aspects:

A. Evaluation of the research proposal
   I. Quality of Research
   II. The Research Environment
   III. Work Plan

B. Evaluation of the nominated candidate
   I. Scholarly work and academic ability
   II. Leadership ability and experience
   III. Teaching experience

Importance will be attached to the originality and innovativeness of the project, as well as to whether or not it entails international cooperation. The main criterion for selection will be a high level of academic quality by international standards. In addition to the quality of the candidate and his or her work. The candidate’s ability and ambition to build and lead a research group, and to cooperate with leading international research groups, will be given particular emphasis. Successful candidates are expected to pursue additional competitive funding opportunities (e.g. EU funding) during the project period. The
nominated candidate’s experience of, or potential for, research management, including national and international research collaboration, is an important evaluation criterion. In line with the strategy of the respective department and faculty, the proposed research group can also aim to be a node in an already established research environment or group, with the candidate as the leader of the node.

In addition, the host department’s plans for recruitment of candidates with outstanding academic merit and research potential will be of importance to the foundation’s final decision.

**Submittal of proposals**
One copy of the prequalification proposal and CV, compiled into one (1) PDF file, should be submitted to the email address: grants[at]bfstiftelse.no on or before 15 March 2019.

**Contact information:**
Oddveig Åsheim: phone +47 416 63 164, oa[at]bfstiftelse.no
Lars Narve Larsen: phone +47 97 54 33 92, lnl[at]bfstiftelse.no
Anne Marie Haga: phone +47 97 00 52 76, amh[at]bfstiftelse.no
Appendix 3 – Funding and project grant agreement

Each BFS grant will be given as financial support for a research project, maximum NOK 10 million per 4-year per grant.

The overall budget of each project should allow for the establishment of a small research team under the leadership of the project leader and should facilitate the career development of the project leader. It is therefore a prerequisite for funding that any BFS contribution is matched by resources from the host faculty at about the same level.

Such matching resources may include salaries, consumables, equipment, overhead related to positions funded by BFS and "leiestedskostnader" (e.g. the use of labs / equipment).³

Funding from the foundation may be put towards

- the salary of the project leader and technical personnel
- PhD and postdoctoral fellowships
- the purchase of research equipment
- other research expenses directly related to the project

Funding from the foundation may not be put towards

- overhead
- other expenses not directly related to the project

In the event a grant application is successful, the foundation and UiB will enter into a project grant agreement, in which their respective responsibilities will be detailed in full.

Grantees are expected to attend the award ceremony in the University Aula on 6 December 2019.

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² Indirect costs/overhead for UoB-funded positions excluded, see footnote to budget template.
³ As described in the mutual agreement ("Rammeavtale") between BFS and UiB of 18 November 2014.