Call for proposals  
issued 15 March 2016

Helmholtz Doctoral Prize

A. Aim of the funding

The Helmholtz Association aims to support talented young researchers from an early stage and to encourage them to continue working in research in the long term. To further this aim, the Helmholtz Association is awarding doctoral prizes, which honour academic achievements and serve as an incentive to remain in academia.

This prize is a useful supplement to the Helmholtz Association’s other successful instruments for promoting young researchers. As recognition of an exceptional doctoral thesis and of outstanding achievements during the doctoral phase, the prize acknowledges the work of PhD students at the Helmholtz Association, thus promoting academic excellence. In addition, the Helmholtz Doctoral Prize serves to encourage PhD students to pursue an academic career and, not least, to increase the number of women among young researchers. The President of the Helmholtz Association expressly encourages the Helmholtz Centres to nominate excellent young female researchers for the award.

B. Target group

The programme is aimed at young researchers who completed their doctoral studies with excellent results at a Helmholtz Centre not more than one year ago, who demonstrated academic excellence and personal commitment during their doctoral studies, conduct research of relevance to the Helmholtz Association’s mission, and are planning a career in research. The candidates serve as role models for PhD students in the Helmholtz Association. The reference date is the deadline by which applications must be submitted to the Helmholtz Association’s Bonn office (20 May 2016). Decisive is the date of the thesis defense. Candidates can only be awarded the prize if they provide proof of having successfully completed their PhD. The PhD certificate must be submitted to the Helmholtz Association’s Bonn office by 31 August 2016 at the latest.

C. Funding scope, duration and amount

One prize is awarded each year in each of the Helmholtz Association’s six research fields (energy; earth and environment; health; aeronautics, space and transport; key technologies; and matter).

The successful candidates will be awarded a one-time prize in the amount of €5,000, which they are free to use as they wish. In addition, a monthly allowance of up to €2,000 for travel and material costs will be granted for a stay abroad of up to six months at an international research institute. The prize winners can organise this stay flexibly, but it must start within a year after the funding decision has been announced. Moreover, the prize winners must remain employed at a Helmholtz Centre during their stay abroad. In case the prize winners should be employed at an international research institution after their PhD, they can use the monthly allowance for a stay at a Helmholtz Centre.
The prize will be awarded by the president at the annual meeting of the Helmholtz Association in September 2016.

D. Application procedure

The Helmholtz Centres nominate suitable candidates for the individual research fields. The Centres are free to choose their own procedure for pre-selecting the candidates. Each Centre may nominate at most one candidate per research field. The nominations should be submitted via the Centres’ directors to the Helmholtz Association’s Head Office by 20 May 2016.

Doctoral graduates may not submit their own applications.

The directors of the Helmholtz Centres should send one copy of the application, complete with original documentation, to the Helmholtz Association in Bonn (Ahrstr. 45, 53175 Bonn). A copy should also be sent by e-mail to Dr Rainer Nicolay (rainer.nicolay@helmholtz.de; responsible for financial and contractual matters).

Applications must include the following documents:

- A cover page with the following information: the candidate’s name and contact details (including an e-mail address and telephone number); the title of the candidate's doctoral thesis; the name of the Helmholtz Centre, institute and supervisor; and the relevance to the Helmholtz Association’s programme (five or six keywords).
- A copy of the candidate’s doctoral certificate (if available) and grades and, where relevant, of other certificates (e.g. credits obtained at the Graduate Schools and/or Research Schools).
- A detailed CV (including awards, scholarships, stays abroad, lectures/poster presentations at conferences, etc.).
- A list of publications published during and after the candidate’s doctoral studies.
- A letter of recommendation from the director of the Helmholtz Centre and/or supervisor, containing the following information: the reasons why the candidate has been nominated (including the relevance of his/her research to the Helmholtz Association’s mission); evaluation of the PhD and other academic achievements to date; assessment of the candidate’s further development and of his/her (research) personality (max. 2 – 3 pages).

E. Decision-making process

The prize winners will be chosen on the basis of the assessment by the Helmholtz Association’s steering committees and in agreement with the President of the Helmholtz Association. Candidates are not required to attend a personal interview.

F. Application deadline and schedule

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<tr>
<td>20 May 2016</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of the Helmholtz Centres’ nominations to the Helmholtz Association's Head Office</td>
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<td>10 June 2016</td>
<td>Forwarding of the applications that meet the award’s formal requirements to the steering committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 August 2016</td>
<td>Submission of the nominations from the steering committees to the Helmholtz Association’s Head Office in Berlin</td>
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<td>End of August 2015</td>
<td>Decision by the President</td>
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<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Award ceremony at the annual meeting of the Helmholtz Association in Berlin</td>
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