



ECA Scholarships

Scholarship program of the European Crystallographic Association

Background

ECA strives to support young scientists in improving their skills, broadening their practical experience, and supporting their professional growth. As a pan-European scientific organization ECA has the financial means, members base and necessary organizational tools to increase its support to young scientists and help the next generation of scientists in crystallography-related research to a better start in their career. ECA recognizes the need to attract the attention of students to the field and provide targeted support and therefore establishes the program of ECA Scholarships, as described further.

ECA Scholarships

ECA Scholarships is a scholarship program of the European Crystallographic Association. The main purpose is provision of funding and administrative support to long-term stays of students in foreign laboratories with the aim of extended training and professional development.

Beneficiaries

- PhD students and post-doctoral associates (up to 5 years from PhD thesis defense) of institutions belonging to the ECA National Member countries or to a CAM (Corporate Affiliate Member)
- Host laboratory of an academic institution in a different ECA National Member country than the Home laboratory or a CAM in a different country
- Home laboratory

Scholarship parties

- Scholarship beneficiaries
- ECA

Applicant

A PhD student or a postdoc (up to 5 years from PhD thesis defense at the date of application), who must be an individual member of ECA at the time of application, performing his/her study program activities in a research institution or university in an ECA National Member country (in a “Home laboratory”) or in a CAM and is not affiliated to the Host laboratory institution.

Host laboratory

A laboratory or a research unit of a research institution or university of ECA National Member country different from the Home laboratory country or of a CAM in a different country.

Length of stay

Stays for a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 6 months will be supported.

Scope of supported Scholarship activities

A Project described in the ECA Scholarship application describes the expected research and training activities of the applicant in the Host laboratory, related to structural science/crystallography. Both research and training components are mandatory. The intended Scholarship activities either contribute to the thesis work of the applicant or extend knowledge, skills and expertise in a particular direction connected with the field of study, which should be described in the application. The research part should be described in a sufficient level of detail to justify the choice of the Host laboratory and enable assessment of the scientific level of the project. The applicant should explain how the results produced under the Scholarship are expected to be published and disseminated.

Applications and their evaluation

- Applicant submits an application form (provided by ECA), his/her brief professional CV, recommendation letter from the Home laboratory PI or supervisor, and a letter from the Host laboratory (PI or scientist responsible for the Scholarship) confirming that in the case of the Scholarship being awarded the awardee would be received and the project would be realized.
- Applications are submitted annually (deadline as determined in the call), for Scholarships starting in the following calendar year.

Scholarship committee

- The ECA Executive Committee establishes a Scholarship committee consisting of a minimum of five members, including an Executive Committee representative. The committee evaluates applications for a given year, resulting in a ranking of the applications. The evaluation is focused on the level of the research project and training activities, profile of the applicant, and the expected impact for the applicant, the Home and Host laboratories, and for crystallography-related science.
- The Scholarship committee may engage external evaluators in the evaluation process.
- The maximum amount of support to ECA Scholarships awarded for a given fiscal year will be decided by the Executive Committee of ECA based on the applications received and the financial situation in the period preceding the relevant year/period.
- The Scholarship committee announces the awarded ECA Scholarship(s) not later than one month before the upcoming award period.
- The Scholarship committee provides the ECA Executive Committee with written confirmation stating the awardee identification, purpose, dates of Scholarship, Home laboratory, Host laboratory and the amount of ECA support.

Financial support

Each ECA Scholarship is supported from the ECA funds in the following way

- A contribution to travel and stay expenses of the awardee, up to € 1,000 per month of Scholarship, up to a maximum of € 6,000 per Scholarship
- A contribution to direct expenses of the Host laboratory in connection with the Scholarship research activities, up to € 500 per month of Scholarship, up to a maximum of € 3,000 per Scholarship

The applicant must state in the Scholarship application the amount of ECA support requested in each category with an explanation based on expected costs, intended research activities, etc.

The contribution towards the travel and stay expenses will be transferred to the Awardee upon confirmation of the start of the Scholarship by the Host laboratory. In the case of projects planned for 4 months and longer, the contribution to the travel and stay expenses will be split into two equal installments; the first installment will be transferred as defined above and the second installment will be transferred to the Awardee after the Scholarship Midterm report is received by ECA.

The contribution to direct expenses will be transferred to the Host laboratory upon confirmation of the start of the Scholarship by the Host laboratory.

Double funding

Concurrent funding of the intended project/stay from this program and other grants or awards from other providers to the Applicant is not allowed. The Applicant must provide details of potential other funding sources for the respective project/stay at the time of application submission to ECA. The Applicant is obliged to inform ECA should the project/stay receive specific funding from another funder. ECA reserves the right to withdraw the ECA Scholarship award decision should this situation occur.

Reporting

Midterm report

A Midterm Scholarship report is required for projects planned for 4 months and longer. The Awardee submits a brief description of the Scholarship project realization activities, the overall status and achievements, and an outlook for the remaining part of the Scholarship period, not later than 2 weeks after the 1st half of the Scholarship project period, signed by the Awardee, the Host laboratory head, and by the Home laboratory head (pdf format, min. ½ page, max. 1 page, submitted by email to the ECA secretary, scans of signed documents are acceptable).

Final report

The Scholarship awardee and Host laboratory are obliged to provide the ECA Executive Committee with the Scholarship Final report via the ECA secretary, including a brief financial report, not later than one month after the end of the Scholarship (pdf format, min. 3 pages, max. 6 pages, signed by the Awardee, the Host laboratory head, and the Home laboratory head, scans of documents are acceptable). The Scholarship report should contain the fulfillment of the planned activities in relation to the activities that were carried out. In particular, it should describe the realized research, training activities, and scientific outputs of the Scholarship (i.e., publications, dissemination activities, posters, talks, new grant applications, etc.). A brief financial report should cover the use of the financial support provided to cover the direct expenses of the Host laboratory.

Additionally, the awardee must provide a one-page report for the ECA publicity purposes (electronic form, via the ECA secretary, illustrations are welcome).

Premature end of Scholarship

Should the Scholarship end prematurely, the Scholarship awardee and the Host laboratory are obliged to

- provide a written explanation of the premature ending and Scholarship report (as above) to the ECA Executive Committee via secretary
- return the proportional part of the Scholarship financial support back to ECA

Scholarship committee

- processes applications, including their ranking
- communicates with the secretary of ECA
- presents to the ECA Executive Committee the main parameters and outcomes of each Scholarship application period

Secretary

- communicates with applicants, Home and Host laboratories
- communicates with the treasurer

Publicity

- ECA reserves the right to publish the name of the awardee, the Home and Host laboratory identification, Scholarship (project) title, and the award period. Publication of details of significant Scholarship outputs by ECA is upon agreement with the Scholarship parties.
- Any publication resulting from the Scholarship must acknowledge the support from the ECA Scholarship program.

Other or undefined terms and conditions

Other or herein undefined terms and conditions regarding ECA Scholarships are in the remit of the ECA Executive Committee.

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