

FRESCO4NoPain Guide for applicants

Recruitment Procedure for 17 Doctoral Candidate positions

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Doctoral Network, Horizon Europe



Beneficiaries



Associated Partners



Project overview

FRESCO4NoPain, Frontier Research Competences for Neuro-modulation and Oscillations in Pain, is funded by Horizon Europe (HORIZON) through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Training & Mobility Actions (TMA) in the form of a Doctoral Network (DN) which will host 17 doctoral candidates (DC) across Europe. The FRESCO4NoPain consortium, led by Aalborg University, gathers 7 beneficiaries from 5 European countries (DK, FR, BE, DE, and UK) with 13 associated partners, comprising a good balance between academic and non-academic institutions while offering a complete set of interdisciplinary skills.

The DCs will be integrated in a one-of-a-kind network-wide training infrastructure conducting frontline research on non-invasive brain stimulation that targets persistent pain based on 1) preclinical studies of the relevant brain circuitries, 2) human studies of the involved mechanisms, and 3) clinical studies. Through FRESCO4NoPain, DCs will access a unique set of basic, experimental, and clinical disciplines in both academic and non-academic settings, tied together by synergistic collaborations across the network.

This document is a guide for applicants outlining the FRESCO4NoPain consortium's strategic approach to recruitment i.e. eligibility, process and evaluation. This procedure applies to all 17 DC recruiting processes.

Key dates

FRESCO4NoPain project start	1st of February 2025
Launch of 17 DC positions	10th of February 2025
Deadline for online applications	7th of April 2025
Assessment finalised	5th of May 2025
Online interviews	5th May to 2nd of June 2025
DC starting date	1st of September 2025



Doctoral candidate positions

Below is a list of the 17 DC positions available. A more detailed description of the individual project can be found in the individual job posting.

DC	Titel	Recruiting institution	Country - Work location
DC1	Identifying imaging signature and neurotransmitter dynamics of neuromodulatory interventions	The National Centre for Scientific Research	France
DC2	Closed-loop stimulation using a multiregional brain-machine interface for pain treatment	The National Centre for Scientific Research	France
DC3	Exploiting insular cortical circuitry for pain relief using neurostimulation and elucidating underlying mechanisms	Heidelberg University Hospital	Germany
DC4	Reverse translating rTMS in mice with neuropathic pain to unravel mechanisms leading to pain relief	Heidelberg University Hospital	Germany
DC5	Bridging the gap between preclinical studies and non-invasive neuromodulation in humans using intracerebral EEG and intracerebral periodic stimulation	UCLouvain - University of Louvain	Belgium
DC6	Assessing effect of alternating current stimulation of the brain and spinal cord on the function of dorsal horn nociceptive circuits and its susceptibility to sensitise	UCLouvain - University of Louvain	Belgium
DC7	Personalise by synchronisation: Analgesic effects of neuromodulation-driven entrainment of pain-related cortical oscillatory activity	Aalborg University	Denmark
DC8	Close-loop, EEG-triggered, non-invasive spinal cord neuromodulation and its efficacy to modulate pain mechanisms and experimental pain models	Aalborg University	Denmark
DC9	Using somatosensory entrainment to modulate neuronal oscillations and the experience of pain	The Technical University of Munich	Germany
DC10	Using tRNS to modulate cortical excitability and the experience of pain	The Technical University of Munich	Germany
DC11	Assessing clinical and electrophysiological predictive factors of long-term analgesic effects of rTMS in patients with chronic neuropathic pain	National Institute of Health and Medical Research	France
DC12	Prediction of response to analgesic rTMS by pre-treatment clinical and cortical oscillatory patterns in people with fibromyalgia pain	National Institute of Health and Medical Research	France



FRESCO4NoPain Recruitment process – Guide for applicants

DC13	Close-loop, non-invasive motor cortex neuromodulation and its analgesic efficacy in people with chronic pain	Aalborg University	Denmark
DC14	Temporal interference stimulation to modulate ongoing oscillatory activity in deep brain structures in humans	UCLouvain - University of Louvain	Belgium
DC15	Neuromodulation-driven entrainment of pain and mood-related cortical oscillatory activity	Aalborg University	Denmark
DC16	Changing the way we think about pain: Strategies for selective cortical engagement of noradrenergic descending pain control	University of Bristol	United Kingdom
DC17	Identifying neuromodulator mechanisms for analgesic effects of transcutaneous spinal stimulation	University of Bristol	United Kingdom

Each DC will have at least two secondments 1) visiting a beneficiary for minimum 2 months and 2) visiting an associated partners for at least 1 month obtaining inter-sectorial experiences. All secondments will take place within the consortium.

Eligibility criteria – Who can apply?

FRESCO4NoPain invites applications of highly-motivated, outstanding candidates, of any nationality, age and gender that respect and comply with the following conditions.



FRESCO4NoPain Recruitment process – Guide for applicants

Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants must hold a relevant master’s degree or equivalent and must have obtained the degree or equivalent by the DC start date of September 1, 2025• Applicants should not be in possession of a doctoral degree at the time of the call deadline. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will not be considered eligible.
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants are required to undertake transnational mobility (i.e., move from one country to another) when taking up the appointment.• Applicants must NOT have lived or carried out their main activity in their main host and recruiting country for more than 12 months in the past 3 years immediately prior to their recruitment date.
English language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants must demonstrate that their ability to understand and express themselves in both written and spoken English is sufficiently high for them to derive the full benefit from the network training.
Exclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants must be working exclusively for FRESCO4NoPain.

Online recruitment procedure and principles

The recruitment process of FRESCO4NoPain project will follow the European Charter for Researchers principles and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The recruitment procedures will be open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable.

The FRESCO4NoPain consortium will also aim for a representative gender balance amongst the DC to be recruited, based on an equal opportunity policy during the recruitment phase.

The advertisement process will start on 10th of February 2025. There will be one call for each DC, which includes a fully detailed description of the project. DC applicants can apply for all available positions if they wish, but in the application, they must clearly state if they are applying for other DC positions.

Each DC call will clearly specify the procedure. However, your application must include the following documents.



FRESCO4NoPain Recruitment process – Guide for applicants

<p>Motivation letter (max. 2 pages)</p>	<p>Must include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief presentation of DC • The main reasons for choice of DC project • General knowledge on the research topic • Main research and training goals • Future plans • Complimentary skills
<p>Curriculum Vitae</p>	<p>A CV (e.g. using the EU model) which states your educational background, experience, techniques, language skills and other skills or experiences relevant for this position. In accordance with mobility rules, it is crucial to provide detailed information about your employment and academic history, including residence details for at least the past three years.</p>
<p>Certificate of academic degree</p>	<p>A copy of the original master's degree with full transcripts. In case the master's degree has not been obtained at the call closing date applicants must upload their BSc degree/diploma in English and upload the transcript of the exams sustained so far during their master course, with a clear indication of the conclusion of the studies.</p>
<p>Recommendation letters</p>	<p>Attesting to the academic standing and potential of the applicant. Must be from an academic supervisor or collaborator, line manager, and/or company CEO. Must contain referees' contact details (will only be contacted upon prior agreement) and name of applicant.</p>

All documents must be in English. Where necessary certified (notary) copies and translations into English must be provided



Selection procedure

The FRESCO4NoPain consortium has agreed on the following evaluation and selections process of DCs to ensure that all candidates are evaluated through the same criteria and with the same methods. The selection procedure is split into the following 3 phases:

Stage 1 Eligibility:

Eligibility check by local recruiting administration i.e. is all required application documents available and is the mobility requirement fulfilled.

Stage 2 Application assessment:

Shortlisting of applications will be done by the Selection Committee. All applications will undergo a thorough selection on grounds of quality and potential, as well as a matching of potential DC scientific profile with the individual projects. The shortlisted application will be assessed according to background, academic qualifications, achievements, and other elements including language knowledge and mobility. The minimum 3 applicants with the highest score will be invited for an interview.

Evaluation criteria for application – used to shortlist candidates for interviews	Scores
1: Academic background and excellence of the applicant: a) research experience b) education, qualifications, grades	Max = 40
2: Relevance and fit with the DC project: a) feasibility based on former experience, b) capacity to carry out the project	Max = 40
3: Professional references: a) ability to work independently, b) quality of previous work performed and scientific curiosity, c) soft skills and non-academic experience d) international experience	Max = 20
Rejection under 75/100 threshold. In case of equality, criteria 1 will prevail on criteria 2 and then criteria 3.	Total = 100

Stage 3 Interview:

The Selection Committee will conduct all interviews online and in English. The interviews will be designed to explore the candidates' achievements, motivation, main research interests and knowledge and experience in the field of their chosen project. All interviews will follow the same format, with all candidates first giving a brief presentation on their achievements and rationale behind the project choice, followed by a series of questions based on the evaluation criteria. The Selection Committee will



develop a final report with reviews and scores for each candidate. Applicants are ranked according to their final score, and the top candidates for each DC will be offered a contract. All non-selected candidates will receive a formal notification for non-selection, in line with the Code of Conduct.

Evaluation criteria - interview	Scores
1: Academic excellence and motivation: a) knowledge of the state of the art of the topic, match between DC profile and topic, b) personal, professional and scientific motivation c) willingness to participate in an international, dynamic and challenging network.	Max = 40
2: Understanding of the project: a) explanation of the problem and hypotheses, b) description of the objectives and methodology, c) feasibility and initiative	Max = 30
3: Communication skills: a) quality and clarity of the presentation, b) quality of answers given to reviewers' question, c) fluency in English	Max = 30
Rejection under 75/100 threshold. In case of equality, criteria 1 will prevail on criteria 2, then criteria 3.	Total = 100

The Selection Committee

The Selection Committee will bring together diverse expertise and competences, have an adequate gender balance, and will include members from different disciplines. All members are adequately trained. The Selection Committee for each DC position will consist of the main supervisor, co-supervisor and mentor. When lack of gender balance, an extra beneficiary will take part in the Selection Committee.

Information and contact

If you, as a potential DC applicant, require further information, please feel free to reach out with any specific questions or concerns. We are happy to provide additional details or clarifications to support your application process.

For additional information please see:

Website: www.fresco4nopain.com

Mail: fresco4nopain@hst.aau.dk

