European Research Council
Executive Agency

Established by the European Commission

ERCEA
JOB OPENING

The European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA), located in Brussels, Belgium, supports the work of the European Research Council, the first pan-European funder of excellent frontier research in Europe. The ERCEA is dedicated to selecting and funding the excellent ideas that have not happened yet, and the scientists that are dreaming them up. The ERCEA is establishing a Reserve List of qualified candidates ('talent pool') from which to hire for the position of:

Project Adviser / Scientific Officer in Life Sciences

CONTRACT TYPE	Contract Agent, Function Group IV (full-time)
REFERENCE	ERCEA/CA/241/2024
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS	27 September 2024 by 12:00 (midday) Brussels time

The Project Adviser / Scientific Officer would join the Life Sciences Unit of the ERCEA's Scientific Department. The Unit counts over 40 highly committed and qualified staff members, subdivided into ten Panel Teams. These Panel Teams cover different areas of research and scholarship in the domain of Life Sciences (LS) allocated along the following nine ERC Panels:

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

In addition, the Unit also includes an LS 'Synergy' Panel, linked to the ERC Synergy call.

POSITION

ERC Project Advisers/Scientific Officers support the work of senior external scientific experts ("Peer Reviewers") in evaluating proposals for ERC grants and monitor the scientific progress of ERC-funded projects in their Panel Team or Panel Teams.

The Project Adviser/Scientific Officer will work under the supervision of senior Scientific Officers / Panel Coordinators in a panel team with three to four members.

Key strengths needed to establish trust-based relationships with different stakeholders and to manage demanding situations include effective organisational, analytical and communication skills, as well as outstanding drafting and presentation skills. ERC Project Advisers / Scientific Officers need to demonstrate the capability to drive independent work forward in the context of a broader team effort.

While not being directly involved in scientific research, the position requires an excellent knowledge of the state of the art in the field and the ability to leverage this knowledge for portfolio analysis and for research project management.

JOB DESCRIPTION

ERCEA Project Advisers / Scientific Officers in Life Sciences would be entrusted with the following tasks and duties:

Support in the coordination of the Evaluation and Selection of Research Proposals

- Support the coordination of the peer review process for the selection of research proposals for the relevant evaluation panels, including the preparation, organisation, operation of the meetings and the documentation of results.
- Contribute to the development of guidelines, orientations and new approaches relating to the proper implementation of the ERC programme.

Project Management

- Provide support to meetings of Scientific Panels for the selection of research proposals by external experts (Panel Members), including the preparation, organisation, operation of the meetings and the documentation of results.
- Assess the scientific implementation of funded projects through periodic reviews, reporting, etc.
- Contribute to the analysis of the portfolio of ERC funded projects and beyond.
- Contribute to the analysis and assessment of the results and impact of the ERC programme.
- Contribute to the development of guidelines, orientations and new approaches relating to the proper implementation of the programme.

External Communication

- Present the ERC programme and project results at workshops, seminars, conferences and other public events, to external stakeholders.
- Contribute to publications produced by the ERC programme intended for external stakeholders.
- Extract and disseminate best practices and facilitate exchanges of experience.
- Collect information and draft replies to questions from external stakeholders.
- Produce reports and minutes on high-level meetings as required.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

On the closing date for applications, candidates must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be a national of a member state of the European Union and enjoy full rights as a citizen.
- Have fulfilled any obligations imposed by the applicable laws regarding military service.
- Meet the character requirements for the duties involved.
- Be physically fit to perform their duties.
- Have a level of education which corresponds to completed university studies of at least three years attested by a diploma.
- Produce evidence of a thorough knowledge of one of the languages of the European Union and a satisfactory knowledge of another language of the Union to the extent necessary for the performance of duties.
- Have successfully passed an EPSO CAST in Function Group IV (that is still valid)[1] OR be registered in a CAST Permanent Call for Expression of Interest in Function Group IV[2].

[1] Candidates must be included in the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) database for Contract Agents in Function Group IV and have successfully passed the EPSO tests for that Function Group. Please consult here the valid EPSO CASTs.

[2] The pre-selected candidates will be requested by the ERCEA to undergo the EPSO computer-based reasoning tests unless they have already valid results. Only candidates that have successfully passed the EPSO CAST FG IV tests will be invited to the next step in the selection process (see below).

SELECTION CRITERIA

Candidates need to make explicitly clear in their application how and to what extent they meet the selection criteria. The applications of candidates that do not meet one or more of the essential selection criteria, will not be evaluated further.

Essential selection criteria

- Strong academic background in Life Sciences including at least a completed master's level degree.
- Three years of professional research experience, or a PhD, in a relevant scientific area of Life Sciences.
- A strong motivation and clear understanding of the position of Project Adviser / Scientific Officer.
- Knowledge of English at level C1, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Advantageous selection criteria

- Good knowledge of the state of the art in the field, and ability to make use of it in portfolio analysis and feedback to policy.
- Further research experience in a relevant area for the profile.
- Experience in working as a researcher in international research projects and/or the management of research projects.
- Experience managing processes for the scientific evaluation of proposals and the scientific monitoring of funded projects.
- Knowledge of European research policies and programmes.

Job-related competencies

- Outstanding drafting and presentation skills in English, with an eye for detail.
- Ability to work well under pressure in demanding situations and ability to handle several tasks simultaneously.
- Ability to deliver quality results individually and in a team while working in a multicultural environment.
- Strong organisational and communication skills.

HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in joining the ERCEA, please follow these steps:

1. **If you do not have yet a valid and successful EPSO CAST in Function Group IV, create, or update, an application for the Permanent CAST profile (EPSO CAST) at FG IV level.**
   → Register for the Permanent CAST profile here. You can register in any profile at FG IV level (e.g., Project Management EPSO/CAST/P/4/2017).

2. **Submit a 2-page CV and ERCEA Application Form by 27 September 2024 by 12:00 (midday) Brussels time to** ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu
   → Download the application form here and follow the instructions and rules listed in the Application Form.

If the application has been submitted successfully, candidates will receive a confirmation e-mail within three working days. Candidates are strongly advised not to leave the submission process to the last minute. The ERCEA cannot be held responsible for any delay due to, for example, heavy internet traffic or connection difficulties.

In the case of multiple submissions, only the latest valid and complete application will be considered.

Candidates are responsible for the information they provide and for ensuring that all the information is complete and correct before submitting the application.

Candidates will be disqualified if they do not:

- Comply with the conditions of application for the Job Opening;
- Have an updated EPSO CAST application in the relevant profile by the deadline for applications;
- Send their application by the deadline;
- Send a complete application including all requested elements;
- Complete the application in English.

Furthermore, if it is established at any point in time that the information in an application has been falsified, candidates will be disqualified from the selection process.

At any stage of the selection, the ERCEA can request candidates to present, for example, certified copies of degrees, diplomas, references, proof of experience. These documents should not be sent during the selection process, except upon request of the ERCEA.

STEPS OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

All correspondence regarding this Job Opening will be in English and will be sent to the e-mail from which candidates submitted their application. Should candidates' e-mail address change, they are asked to inform ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu.

The selection process will take several months to complete. Candidates will be informed of the outcome of the different stages in due time.

Upon the closure of the publication window, the candidates' eligibility will be checked by the HR Team based on the information included in the application in line with the criteria elaborated above. The recruiting service will conduct the shortlisting of the eligible applications in line with the criteria elaborated above. The shortlist will include:

- Pre-selected candidates who already have a valid and successful FG IV EPSO CAST. These candidates might be invited to the testing phase at the ERCEA without sitting the EPSO CAST test again.
- Pre-selected candidates who do not already have a valid and successful FG IV EPSO CAST. These candidates will be invited by EPSO to sit a series of computer-based multiple-choice question (MCQ) tests during the time window corresponding to the present Job Opening. Only candidates who have successfully passed these tests might be invited to the testing phase of the ERCEA. Sample EPSO tests can be found here.

The testing phase at the ERCEA consists of an interview and a possible written exercise to check specific skills required for the job (e.g., drafting skills). The exact testing modalities will be outlined in the interview and written test invitation.

As a general rule, the dates set by the ERCEA cannot be changed at the candidate's request.

Candidates who succeed in the ERCEA interview and possible exercise are included in a Reserve List initially valid for at least two years:

- The Reserve List is approved by the ERCEA Director and will include the candidates who meet the evaluation criteria, listed alphabetically.
- Candidates included in the Reserve List could be offered a job when there is a vacancy for which their profile is suitable and subject to reference checks.
- The inclusion on the Reserve List does not imply any entitlement to employment.

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

The selection process aims to establish a Reserve List of eligible and qualified candidates. These candidates may be offered a contract with the ERCEA under the following terms:

- One-year contract, with the possibility of renewal. A permanent contract/contract of indefinite duration can be offered after two fixed-term contracts of one year each.
- A basic salary (before EU Institutions' tax[3]) between 4.102,30 EUR and 5.941,96 EUR depending on the length of the professional experience. On top of the basic salary, the remuneration package may include further monthly allowances (an expatriation allowance amounting to 16% in addition to the basic salary; a household allowance; etc.). *For example, a Project Adviser who has six years of professional experience after the qualifying degree, who is single, and who is entitled to an expatriation allowance, earns an estimated monthly net salary of 4.447,24 EUR.*
- Generous leave entitlements; recuperation of overtime worked; flexible working hours; full international health insurance.
- Coverage under the European Union Institutions' Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme; access to the European Union's pension plan after ten years of service.
- The place of employment is Brussels, Belgium.
- Free access to a European School and access to childcare facilities of the European Commission.
- The ERCEA cares about well-being and offers ample opportunities for personal and professional learning and development.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The ERCEA values difference, promotes equality. The ERCEA applies a policy of equal opportunities and accept applications without discrimination on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, as per Article 1(d)(1) of the Staff Regulations.

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

The ERCEA ensures that applicants' personal data are processed as required by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (Official Journal of the European Communities, L 295 of 21 November 2018). This applies in particular to the confidentiality and security of such data. Candidates are invited to carefully read the Data Protection Notice, which provides useful information about the processing of their personal data and relevant right.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

In assessing candidates' merits, Selection Committees observe the principle of equal treatment. If candidates nevertheless believe that one of these principles has not been applied in their case, they have the right, within 10 calendar days from the date when they receive notification of the decision that was sent to them, to request a review at: ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu.

If, at any stage of the selection, candidates consider that their interests have been prejudiced by a particular decision, or lack thereof, they can, within three months from the date on which candidates are notified of the act adversely affecting them, lodge an administrative complaint pursuant to Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations, at: ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu.

More information on appeal procedures may be found here.

[3] Note that the salary is not subject to national taxation.