**Program description**

**Background**

Diabetes has a big impact on the lives of people with diabetes and their families. Even with optimal self-management, there is always fear of developing complications or comorbidities such as the loss of eyesight, heart problems and kidney failure. In addition, people with diabetes may face psychosocial challenges, which affect their psychological health and quality of life.

The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation (in Dutch: ‘Diabetes Fonds’) aims to achieve and develop scientific insights on how diabetes can be prevented, treated or cured. We are able to finance research on diabetes thanks to numerous donations from people with diabetes, their friends and families and the public at large. We believe that spending these donations on research and innovations will positively impact the lives of people with diabetes and ultimately lead to a dream of many: a world without diabetes. In the meantime, we also aim to improve the quality of life of people with diabetes.

**Purpose**

The Diabetes Fonds Fellowships aim to encourage promising scientists to accelerate their scientific career, or establish themselves, in the field of diabetes research. Funding will be awarded to exceptional candidates who have the capacity to make significant contributions to the field of diabetes research, hence to positively impact the lives of people with diabetes. To achieve this, we strongly encourage that the outcomes of scientific research will be transferred to potential users and benefits people with diabetes. Therefore, applicants will be assessed not only on their curriculum vitae (CV) and research proposal but also on their ability to create impact on a societal, academic and/or economic level. This means that applicants need to elaborate in their application how the results of the proposed research will potentially become accessible for a wide audience and how they plan to seek opportunities to implement the outcomes of their study into practice.

**For whom?**

Applicants for the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships need to be affiliated to a university, academic centre, university of applied sciences or non-profit research institute. We want to stress that the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships are not only available for candidates who want to perform diabetes research in medical or biomedical disciplines. We also strongly encourage candidates from other disciplines to apply, e.g. candidates with a background in psychology, sociology, technology or with a multidisciplinary background. In all instances, the research proposal needs to have a direct focus on diabetes.

**Available funding**
Within the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships program, you can apply for two types of funding.

**Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowships**Junior Fellowships are available for junior researchers who have the ambition to accelerate their career in diabetes research and do so in close collaboration with an established researcher. The junior researcher is the main applicant of the grant and the established researcher acts as a coach and supervisor during the research project. The junior researcher has obtained a PhD in diabetes or another research field and may have some experience as a postdoc researcher. A strong background in diabetes research is not a prerequisite for the junior researcher. Through his or her support, the established researcher should make clear why the junior researcher is the best candidate to work on the proposed project, what (future) contribution the candidate is expected to make to the particular area of interest and how the established scientist will (pro)actively assist the junior researcher in achieving his/her ambitions. The established researcher has a role in finding solutions (together with the candidate) when the progress of the research is hampered. In addition, it should be stated in the application how the proposed work and the applicant are embedded in the research group of the established researcher.

Besides the CV and scientific achievements of the junior and established researcher, the scientific quality and (potential) impact of the proposed work for people with diabetes will be important criteria in the review process. More information on these criteria is mentioned below.

To be eligible for a Junior Fellowship, two conditions have to be met. Firstly, the PhD defence of the junior candidate has taken place no later than 6 years prior to the deadline of the call for submission of a Letter of Intent. Secondly, the time spent on research since the PhD defence, when added up, does not exceed 3 years (based on a work week of 38 hours).
An example: You defended your PhD on June 1, 2017. The past 3½ years you had a combined position for research and education. On average you spent 25% of your work week of 38 hours on education, while the remainder of your work week was dedicated to research. Because your PhD defence was less than 6 years ago and in the meantime you effectively spent less than 3 years net on research, you are eligible for a Junior Fellowship.

Based on the quality of the applications, we aim to support **two** Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowships in 2021 with a maximum of **€ 275.000** each for a maximum of **4 years**.

**Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowships**Senior Fellowships are available for senior researchers at postdoc level who have the ambition to further their career in diabetes research and are close to start their own research group. Applicants have a proven track record in preferably diabetes research. They can show that they are able to independently conduct research, bring innovative ideas from a research plan to published results, contribute to the (international) diabetes research community, anticipate opportunities for the implementation of study results and have the potential to become one of the future leaders in a particular area of diabetes research. The Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowship should enable the recipient to start and develop their own line of research. This should not only include excellent scientific work but also the ability to collaborate with fellow researchers, companies and potential investors, present and promote their own work to a wide audience, encourage and facilitate young researchers and place academic results in the context of people with diabetes.

Besides the CV and scientific achievements of the researcher, the scientific quality and (potential) impact of the proposed work for people with diabetes are important criteria in the review process. More information on these criteria is mentioned below.

To be eligible for a Senior Fellowship, two conditions have to be met. Firstly, the date of the PhD defence of the senior researcher lies between 3 and 10 years prior to the deadline of the call for submission of a Letter of Intent. Secondly, the senior candidate has spent a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 8 years (when added up, based on a work week of 38 hours) on research since the PhD defence.
An example: You defended your PhD on September 1, 2013. The past 7½ years you had a combined position for research and education. On average you spent 25% of your work week of 38 hours on education, while the remainder of your work week was dedicated to research. In addition, you were on maternity leave for 6 months in total. Because your PhD defence was 7½ years prior to the deadline of the call and in the meantime you effectively spent 5 years and 3 months net on research, you are eligible for a Senior Fellowship.

Based on the quality of the applications, we aim to support **two** Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowships in 2021 with a maximum of **€ 325.000** each for a maximum of **4 years.**

**Procedure**
To apply for a Diabetes Fonds Fellowship you first need to submit a Letter of Intent. If you receive a positive advice about this Letter of Intent, you are invited to write a Full Application.

*Letter of Intent Diabetes Fonds Fellowships*The deadline for the electronic version (in Word) of the Letter of Intent for a Diabetes Fonds Junior or Senior Fellowship is **Monday February 15,2021 at 12:00 CET**.The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation will check whether the Letter of Intent meets the conditions of the program call. The Scientific Advisory Board (*Wetenschappelijke Adviesraad; WAR*) of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation evaluates the Letter of Intent based on the review criteria (mentioned below). After a written evaluation, the Scientific Advisory Board will discuss the submitted Letter of Intent in a meeting. The Scientific Advisory Board advises the Executive Board whether or not to invite an applicant to write a Full Application. The Executive Board of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation makes the final decision on who will be invited to write a Full Application. The Full Application will consist of 1) a Scientific Application and 2) a ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen’.

*Full Application Diabetes Fonds Fellowships*The deadline for the Full Application is **Monday June 14, 2021 at 12:00 CEST**.Applicants need to send in electronic versions (in Word) of the Scientific Application and a ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen*’*.

*Scientific Application*Several international researchers with expertise on the specific topic are invited to review the Scientific Application. All reviewers will remain anonymous. The applicants are given the opportunity to write a rebuttal to the issues raised by the reviewers. In addition, a statistician will review the Scientific Application. Issues raised by the statistician can also be addressed by the applicants in the rebuttal.

*‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen’*The ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen*’* will be reviewed by the Societal Advisory Board (*Maatschappelijke Adviesraad; MAR*) of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation, based on (potential) relevance of the proposed work for people with diabetes. The ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen*’* needs to be written in Dutch. Similar to the Scientific Application, the applicants are given the opportunity to write a rebuttal on any issues raised by the Societal Advisory Board. The reviews and the rebuttals are discussed in a meeting of the Societal Advisory Board and a final score will be given.

*Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board and presentation by the applicants*During a meeting in November, the members of the Scientific Advisory Board will discuss the Scientific Application, reviews and rebuttals and a final score will be given for CV, research proposal and knowledge utilisation. In addition, the junior and senior applicants are invited at the meeting to give a presentation to introduce themselves, discuss their future career plans and provide in-depth information on the research proposal. Based on the presentation and the evolving discussion, the Scientific Advisory Board and a number of representatives of the Societal Advisory Board that are present will give a score for the presentation.

Subsequently, a final ranking list will be made with the best scoring application at the top. The least scoring application will be at the bottom of the list. This ranking is based on the scores for the Scientific Application (CV 20%, research proposal 30% and knowledge utilisation 15%), the ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen’ 20% and the presentation 15%. An application can only be considered for approval when the ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen’ and the research proposal in the Scientific Application are scored as ‘Good’, ‘Very Good’ or ‘Excellent’.

*Executive Board*The ranking list will enable the board members to give a final advice to the Executive Board. Based on this advice, as well as the current financial resources, the Executive Board decides which application(s) will be approved. If finances allow, subsequent applications from the ranking list, that are found eligible for funding by the Scientific and Societal Advisory Boards, will be granted.

**Deadlines 2021**

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|  | Diabetes Fonds Fellowships |
| Monday February 15, 12:00 CET | **Deadline Letter of Intent**  |
| March/April  | Evaluation of Letter of Intent by Scientific Advisory Board |
| April  | Decision Executive Board on Letter of Intent |
| Monday June 14, 12:00 CEST | **Deadline Full Application, consisting of the Scientific Application and ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen’**  |
| June/July | Review Scientific Application by international reviewers + statistician |
| June/July | Review ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen’ by Societal Advisory Board |
| July | Reviews to applicants |
| Monday August 23, 12:00 CEST | **Deadline Rebuttal** |
| October | Meeting Societal Advisory Board |
| November | Meeting Scientific Advisory Board + representatives of the Societal Advisory BoardPresentation by junior and senior applicants |
| December | Decision Executive Board |

 **Preliminary meeting**
There will be an online meeting to explain the procedure in more detail and to give tips and tricks for writing the proposal. Attendance is highly recommended. Please confirm your presence by sending an e-mail to: research@diabetesfonds.nl

Date: Tuesday 19th of January 2021
Time: 15.00-16.30 CET
Location: Microsoft Teams (you will receive a link)

**Review criteria**

The members of the Scientific Advisory Board, the members of the Societal Advisory Board and the international reviewers will evaluate the Letters of Intent, Scientific Applications and/or ‘Samenvatting voor Ervaringsdeskundigen’ of the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships based on the following criteria:

1. Quality of the candidate
2. Quality, originality and innovative character of the research proposal
3. Knowledge utilisation

Below these criteria are specified.

**I. Quality of the candidate
Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowships***Junior postdoc*

* Past performance (e.g. publication record, presentations, prizes, awards granted, international experience, etc.);
* A track record relevant for the plans outlined in the research proposal;
* Potential of the candidate for establishing a successful and independent career in the scientific field of diabetes. A strong background in diabetes research is not a prerequisite;
* Ability of the candidate to be a passionate advocate of his/her research for a wide audience;
* Potential of the candidate for seeking opportunities to implement the outcomes of the proposed research;
* A Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowship will propel or accelerate the career of the candidate in the scientific field of diabetes.

*Established researcher / Coach*

* Past performance (e.g. publication record, presentations, prizes, awards granted, international experience, etc.);
* Track record of the established researcher in the field of diabetes (or a closely related field) is excellent;
* There seems to be a good fit between the junior’s research proposal and the established researcher’s research program;
* The established researcher:
1. will adopt an active role in coaching the candidate to a successful conclusion of the proposed project,
2. will contribute to find (alternative) solutions, together with the candidate, when progress of the research is hampered by any means of circumstances,
3. will stimulate the personal and professional development of the candidate,
4. will exploit means to bring the candidate into contact with his/her network when seen fit,
5. will ensure that the candidate has a rightful position on published papers (e.g. as first or last author) resulting from the proposed research in the application.

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**Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowships**

*Senior postdoc*

* Past performance (e.g. publication record, presentations, prizes, awards granted, international experience, etc.);
* Track record and standing (preferably) in the field of diabetes is excellent;
* The candidate will be a promising contributor to the scientific field of diabetes;
* Ability of the candidate to lead and supervise other researchers and staff;
* Ability of the candidate to be a passionate advocate of his/her research for a wide audience;
* Potential of the candidate for seeking opportunities to implement the outcomes of the proposed research;
* A Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowship will enable the candidate to establish his/her own line of research in the field of diabetes.

**II. Quality, originality and innovative character of the research proposal**

* The research question is original;
* The proposal is challenging in terms of content;
* The work plan is of high scientific quality and ethically acceptable;
* The proposal addresses innovative concepts, approaches and methods;
* The proposed research is feasible within the time frame described in the proposal;
* The study will have an impact on current concepts and methods;
* The project clearly contributes to the goal of the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation to achieve and develop scientific insights on how diabetes can be prevented, treated or cured. The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation aims to finance research (and innovations) that will ultimately lead to a dream of many: a world without diabetes. However, in the meantime, we also want to give people with diabetes an improved quality of life.
* In case of comparable research questions, the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation prefers the use of human above animal materials. If animal testing is necessary, the design takes into account the recent developments in reducing, refining and replacing animal testing.
* When using a study population or a cohort in the research proposal, it needs to be specified why the study population or cohort is the best fit to answer the research question(s), e.g. describe the participants involved in the research (male/female, socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity; if applicable), how they will be selected, a strategy to include sufficient participants, etc.

**III. Knowledge utilisation**

* People with (high risk of) diabetes will (potentially) benefit directly from the proposed work or the proposed research is promising in terms of future implementation;
* An action plan to allow the outcomes of the project to benefit potential knowledge users, such as people with diabetes, healthcare professionals, companies and other academic disciplines, is included in the proposal;
* Elaborate if and how potential knowledge users will be involved and how the proposed research will contribute to other academic areas and society (e.g. what difference will the results from the research make to the society if applied). Also, include the estimated period over which knowledge utilisation is expected to occur.

**Conditions for writing a proposal**

The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation evaluates the applications based on the following conditions. Applications **not** meeting these conditions will be **excluded** from the procedure.

* Use of the correct application form, available at our website: <https://www.diabetesfonds.nl/speciaal-voor/onderzoekers/diabetes-fonds-fellowships>;
* The form is filled out completely and correctly and the deadline is not exceeded;
* The project has a direct relation with diabetes;
* The project takes place in The Netherlands for more than 50% of the duration and resources;
* If a clinical study is included, it needs to be performed under the surveillance and responsibility of an academic institute, university or non-profit research institute;
* The main applicant is affiliated to a university, academic centre, university of applied sciences or non-profit research institute;
* The budget meets the guidelines in the document ‘*Regeling Subsidieverlening’* and the ‘*Algemene Subsidievoorwaarden’.* Of note, personnel costs need to be derived from the most recently updated salary tables accompanying the *‘*CAO-Nederlandse Universiteiten’. These personnel categories and costs can also be found in the ‘*Vergoedingentabel*’ on our website: <https://www.diabetesfonds.nl/subsidievoorwaarden>;
* Applications for the Diabetes Fonds Fellowships 2021 need to meet the conditions and requirements described in the ‘Algemene Subsidievoorwaarden’, which can be found at our website: <https://www.diabetesfonds.nl/subsidievoorwaarden>. Applicants need to be aware that the ‘Algemene Subsidievoorwaarden’ may have been liable to change in case they are invited to write a Full Application. The applicants will then be notified by the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation accordingly.
* The project concerns independent research activities. Applications for additional finances will be excluded from the procedure;
* The project does not concern a pilot study or research primary based on methodology;
* The project does not entail research on the indication for use or effectiveness of a medicine;
* The maximum amount requested should not exceed € 275.000 (Diabetes Fonds Junior Fellowship) or € 325.000 (Diabetes Fonds Senior Fellowship) for a period of maximum 48 months. The duration of the project can be extended to a maximum of eight years for medical researchers.

**Extra information is needed in case of:**

* Proposals resulting from ongoing projects. Please indicate how the application differs from the current activities and whether there is an overlap or connection between the ongoing and proposed projects;
* Proposals that are simultaneously offered for funding elsewhere. Please inform us which organization the proposal is offered to, when the decision on granting is expected and what amount of funding is requested. If the research proposal is granted elsewhere, the proposal will be excluded from the procedure;
* Research proposals that have been previously denied by the Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation. Motivate why the grant is applied for again and inform us precisely how the current proposal differs from the earlier proposal;
* In case a doctorate has not yet been awarded. No later than November 1, 2021, we need to receive an official declaration by the entire manuscript committee that the manuscript of the thesis has been approved.

**Contact information**

Send your electronic application to:

research@diabetesfonds.nl

Diabetes Fonds

Kennis & Innovatie

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For further questions or remarks please contact Jeanette Rothuizen.

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