Individual MECAM-Fellowships up to 8 months 2027-2028

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Eligibility

1. **Who is eligible for the long-term MECAM fellowships?**

The fellowships are aimed at researchers from any country, any nationality, at all stages of their academic career (postdocs or advanced researchers), and from any discipline of the Humanities or Social Sciences. Scholars without a current institutional affiliation are equally welcome to apply.

2. **What exactly does it mean to be a "postdoc" or an "advanced researcher"?**

Postdocs, in general, completed their PhD no more than four years ago. Advanced researchers completed their PhD at least five years ago. Please note that current doctoral students (PhD candidates) are not eligible to apply.

3. **What language skills are required for a MECAM fellowship?**

MECAM's working languages are English, French, and Arabic. Applicants should be able to communicate in at least two of these languages. Applications should be submitted in English or French.

4. **Do I have to be associated with one of MECAM's partner institutions to apply?**

No, an association with MECAM's partner institutions is not a precondition for application.

Application

1. **Can I submit my application by e-mail?**

Applications sent by e-mail will not be considered. Instead, we ask all applicants to submit their application via the secure online application platform of the Forum Transregionale Studien.

2. **Do I need to hand in samples of my scholarly work or recommendation letters along with my application?**

It is necessary to send us at least one sample of your academic work. Letters of recommendation can be waived. However, in the application platform you will be asked to provide two references from academics who know your work.

3. **Is the list of bibliographic references included in the page count of the project outline (1000 words)?**

Yes. A short bibliography should be part of your project outline.

4. **Are applicants expected to have published already?**

Yes. You are expected to have published academic articles or books prior to your application.

5. **When will I find out whether my application was successful?**

All applicants will be informed in writing end of May about the result of their application by the MECAM Coordination Office.

6. **What happens if my application is successful?**

Successful applicants will be informed by the Coordination Office and instructed on all further steps. This includes all further agreements regarding the prospective fellowship.

Fellowship Grants

1. **What are the financial conditions of the fellowship?**

MECAM concludes an individual agreement with each fellow before their arrival, setting out the specific financial and practical conditions of the stay. The grant is calculated individually in accordance with the "no gain, no loss" principle. In general, the amount is based on the fellow's salary at their home institution and is intended to enable them to undertake the fellowship without suffering a financial loss as a result of participating. Where applicable and duly justified, additional allowances may be considered, including a rent allowance (up to the standard local rent level), a cost-of-living adjustment and a family allowance. The calculation and any applicable allowances are agreed individually and set out in the fellowship agreement.

2. **What allowances can be paid to the MECAM fellow in addition to the stipend?**

In addition to the stipend, MECAM pays allowances for all fellows where the following criteria apply:

- All fellows will be reimbursed for their travel expenses from their place of residence to Tunis as well as the return journey (e.g. flight -economy class; train -2nd class, etc.). Original receipts and boarding passes must be presented to the MECAM Coordination Office. If the total costs of the flight (economy) and additional travel expenses exceed 1000 EUR and there is no cheaper alternative flight, scholars should contact the MECAM Coordination Office before booking. In addition, the re-location costs to Tunis, such as fees for extra luggage and visa fees, are reimbursed. Furthermore, accommodation costs in Tunis are also reimbursed by providing proof of expenses up to a maximum of 600 dinars (approx. 180 EUR) per month. The basis for this amount is the rent index for Tunis in a residential area estimated by the real estate agency Tecnocasa and the website www.expat.com.
- All fellows will be reimbursed for documented research expenses up to an amount of 500 EUR upon submission of receipts or invoices.

3. **Does the MECAM fellowship involve compulsory social insurance?**

The MECAM fellowship is legally structured as a visiting-researcher affiliation with the Rectorate of the University of Tunis, rather than as an employment relationship. During the fellowship, fellows receive an official affiliation letter, which also grants access to relevant university facilities and research resources. As the fellowship does not establish an employment relationship, MECAM does not make contributions to pension or unemployment insurance. Fellows are responsible for arranging adequate personal and health insurance. Health insurance is mandatory in Tunisia, and proof of adequate coverage is required for visa and residency procedures.

4. **Is the MECAM fellowship tax free?**

The stipend is tax-free in Germany. It is up to the fellows to clarify whether this tax exemption is also recognised in their home country.

5. **Is the release of the fellows from other obligations at their home institution a precondition for MECAM's fellowships?**

The precondition for a MECAM fellowship is the complete or partial release of the fellow from other obligations at their home universities or other institutions. Which functions can be carried out further, in the sense of a partial release, is negotiated individually.

Research stay

1. **How is MECAM's fellowship structured?**

The MECAM fellowship runs for eight months and is designed as a residential fellowship at MECAM in Tunis, Tunisia. It is expected that all fellows are present for the eight months in Tunisia. Each fellow relates to at least one Interdisciplinary Research Field (IRF). The primary objective of all fellowships is to create a high-quality and flexible environment for exchange and debate between researchers from different countries, disciplines, and at different stages of their academic careers. Therefore, virtual and personal forms of cooperation on topic- specific research questions are central to individual research projects and beyond.

2. **What is expected from the MECAM fellows?**

Expectations for each fellow are contractually defined in the document "Terms & Conditions", which is signed with the acceptance of the fellowship. These include, among others, to take up residence in Tunis; to work on the fellow's individual research project and to participate regularly in MECAM's activities and seminars they are associated with, including:

- weekly in-person colloquia with lectures and presentations of individual research projects in presence of other fellows and in close individual coordination with a Tunisian university;
- produce a MECAM PAPER (https://mecam.tn/mecam-papers/);
- an initial and/or concluding in-person workshop within the framework of MECAM's fellow seminar ("MECAM Spectrum") with the involvement of MECAM's Principal Investigators working on IRFs and/or external guests and/or scientists;

3. **What are the residential obligations during my MECAM fellowship?**

The fellowship is residential and requires regular presence at the MECAM site in Tunis. Fellows must inform the MECAM Coordination Office in advance of absences lasting four to six days. Absences of more than seven days must be discussed and agreed in advance with one of the MECAM directors; the individual fellowship agreement specifies that the director's approval is required in order to avoid a reduction. As a general rule, a fellow is not entitled to the full monthly stipend if they are absent for more than seven consecutive days or for more than 14 days in total during the fellowship. MECAM reserves the right to reduce the stipend accordingly. The agreement does not prescribe a fixed daily deduction or an automatic calculation per day of absence: any reduction is determined in accordance with the contractual provisions and the circumstances of the absence. Fellows should therefore obtain written confirmation from the Coordination Office and the relevant director before making travel arrangements that may exceed these limits.

Participation in academic conferences, research trips and visits to archives or libraries that are essential to the fellow's project are not treated as an absence, provided that such activities do not exceed one uninterrupted week or 14 days in total over the fellowship period. Exceptional travel for visa purposes will be permitted. Fellows should inform the MECAM Coordination Office in advance and coordinate the necessary arrangements.

4. **May I shorten or extend my fellowship?**

No, in principle the MECAM fellowship can neither be shortened nor extended. At the beginning of the research stay in Tunis the fellow is only entitled to their first full stipend if they arrive/start by the third working day of the first fellowship month. Fellows who arrive after this date are not entitled to a full payment in that month. In the last fellowship month, the fellow is expected to be present at least until the 27th of the month. Fellows who leave Tunis before this date are not entitled to a full stipend payment of their fellowship for that month.

5. **Can you help me find accommodation during my fellowship period?**

The search for accommodation should be organised by the fellow, but support by MECAM's Coordination Office is offered.

6. **I would like to come to Tunis with my family. Do you take care of the organisation of childcare?**

Childcare should be organised by the fellow, but support by MECAM's Coordination Office can be granted.