

Now open for applications: opnMe PostDoc grant program opn2TALENTS

Advanced cellular models for retinal diseases

Using innovative cellular systems, how would you propose to explore the multifactorial pathophysiology of retinal diseases with the goal to identify and explore novel therapeutic entry points for patients in need?

Submit your [scientific proposal](#) for a chance to be selected to conduct your proposed research plan as part of your PostDoc project at the Discovery Research facilities of Boehringer Ingelheim in Biberach, Germany at one of the leading pharmaceutical companies worldwide.

What is the context of the opportunity that we are currently offering?

Visual impairment and blindness have a profound and devastating impact on the lives of the affected person, their families and society. Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a leading cause of blindness worldwide, affecting more than 200 million people. With an aging global population, the prevalence of AMD is expected to increase in the coming years, making it a significant public health concern. More than 100 million people are affected worldwide by diabetic retinopathies.

Driven by our passion to improve care, we transform the retinal health landscape by developing novel treatments and technologies, especially where nothing currently exists. Our ambition is clear - prevent vision loss in people at risk and to protect, preserve or restore vision in those with retinal disease. We are pursuing both oral and *intra-vitreal* treatments and are exploring opportunities in gene therapy to help us deliver therapeutic advances in our core indications: age-related macular degeneration, diabetes-related retinal degeneration as well as inherited retinal diseases (including e.g., Stargardt disease).

Science and innovation are at the core of the comprehensive pipeline portfolio we have built in Retinal Health. Our research focus is on targeting key mechanisms in the pathogenesis of retinal diseases: vascular dysfunction, neuronal dysfunction, and inflammation. We are using genetic data and patient-derived material to better understand the pathophysiological drivers of retinal diseases. We have established strong partnerships with leading academic institutions and pharmaceutical companies to accelerate the development of novel therapies for retinopathies.

A major challenge for the development of novel therapies is the availability of innovative cellular systems recapitulating important parts of the pathophysiology of defined retinal diseases and enabling the translation of experimental results to patients. We are therefore seeking cutting-edge solutions that can bridge the gap between laboratory research and clinical application.

Which innovative models would you develop to enable a translational path ‘from bench to bedside’? Apply now to join Boehringer Ingelheim as part of the prestigious PostDoc grant program [opn2TALENTS](#).

What will be the reward to the winner?

As a winner of this call, you will have the unique opportunity to pursue your own submitted research project as a fully resourced PostDoc project in the Retinopathy team at Boehringer Ingelheim at the [Discovery Research site in Biberach/Riss](#), Germany. You will obtain a position for up to 3 years* with Boehringer Ingelheim within a cross-functional, international team of world-class scientists working on retinal diseases. The grant would also allow you to carry out parts of your planned experiments at your current home institution. [*The offered position initially covers a duration of 24 months with an option for extension by another 12 months.]

You want to learn more about living in Biberach at the river Riss?

Find out more [here](#)

At Boehringer Ingelheim, you will have access to a fully equipped laboratory in a state-of-the-art research facility including access to all relevant tools (e.g., iPSC, retinal organoids) and technologies. Benefit from mentoring through our internal experts, have the chance to attend

international conferences, and to publish your results in high-ranking journals. You will be part of the vibrant PostDoc community at Boehringer Ingelheim in Biberach with

manifold opportunities for scientific, cross-functional exchanges for your personal development. You will have the opportunity to learn the process and challenges of drug discovery from the inside, including additional training and mentoring program.

In addition, benefit from the rich packages for employee benefit. Our most important asset in achieving our global vision is our people. We prioritize your growth, investing in our people through mentoring, coaching, skill-building, leadership development, and academic support. Our infrastructure promotes wellness with sports groups, health counseling, onsite medical services, and regular check-ups. Achieve work-life balance with flexible work hours, remote working, childcare support, counseling, and convenient amenities. We ensure financial health with employer loans, private insurances, access to discounts, and a company pension scheme. Benefit also from our excellent and healthy on-site catering and the opportunity for take away meals. We offer relocation support and interim accommodation to make joining us easy.

What potential solutions could be in scope?

We are seeking detailed research proposals that contain a well-structured plan outlining a new and compelling scientific approach and can be completed within 3 years*. The focus of the project should be on the development of novel *in vitro* or *ex vivo* cellular models reflecting key aspects of the pathophysiology of retinal diseases (age-related macular degeneration, diabetes-related retinal degeneration, Stargardt disease). The models proposed should help to bridge the gap between laboratory research and clinical applications.

What potential solutions would be out of scope?

- New animal models.
- Research proposals outside of our core retinal disease indications (i.e., age-related macular degeneration, diabetes-related retinal degeneration, Stargardt diseases).
- Proposals which will take more than 3 years to complete.

What are the requirements to participate at this call?

- PhD with strong background in Molecular and Cell Biology.
- Hands-on *in vitro* and *ex vivo* experience in the field of retinal diseases.
- Displayed examples of creativity that led to out-of-the-box scientific ideas and results.
- Strong understanding of retinal biology and the pathways that drive the pathophysiology of retinal diseases.
- Track record of independent research as exemplified through publications or patents.
- Very good oral communication and presentation skills as well as the ability to work in multidisciplinary teams in a matrix environment.
- Fluent language skills in English are mandatory, German language skills is a plus.

What information should be included in your answer submission?

Please use our PostDoc grant application template to provide a 4-5 page non-confidential proposal (available for download on the following [site](#)). Please complement with your CV, publication list, and recommendation letters.

If confidential data exists that would strengthen the proposal, please indicate that information is available to share under a Confidential Disclosure Agreement (CDA). If we find the non-confidential concept proposal sufficiently interesting, we will execute a CDA for confidential discussions.

What are the individual steps and timelines of the overall program?

- Step 1 Please complete your application including a project proposal by October 25, 2023, 11:59 pm PST at the very latest. A full application package consists of your CV including references and a publication list. In addition, please submit the scientific project proposal based on our template (available for download from the following [site](#)). Please note that we will be unable to accept applications without a research proposal addressing our scientific question.

- Step 2 We plan to finalize the review of all applications within three weeks until November 15, 2023.
- Step 3 All final candidates will be invited for an opn2TALENTS interview week that will take place from December 11 – 15, 2023. Even as we plan to give enough time for the finalists to prepare for their travel plans, we suggest that you block this time frame in your calendars already now. Please expect that you will be invited for only one day during this time frame. Depending on your location, please reserve more than one day for travel. All final candidates have the chance to present and discuss their research proposal at an internal meeting. Please prepare a PowerPoint version of your project proposal and be prepared for an in-depth scientific discussion of your ideas and approaches. Please also be prepared for additional interviews with members of the scientific team and our human resources department. Please address any questions you may have during this week as well.
- Step 4 Beginning of January 2024, we plan to announce the final winner of the opn2TALENTS PostDoc grant.
- Step 5 February 1, 2024 represents the earliest start date to work on your project at our research site in Biberach, Germany.

How to apply?

- Check the outline of the opn2TALENTS grant opportunity “[Advanced cellular models for retinal diseases](#)” on opnMe.
- Alternatively, you may click the “Get Application Template” banner.
- Follow the instructions to upload your submission document (requires login or registration).
- The upload allows you to attach additional application files such as your CV, publication list, and references. Please note that the maximum file size is 15MB per file.
- You will be able to access your final submitted collaboration proposal in your personal dashboard and follow its review status.
- Please also visit the [FAQ section](#) on opnMe.com to learn more about our opn2TALENTS program.

What else is important to Boehringer Ingelheim?

- Our purpose is to transform lives for generation. Therefore, we developed three key principles for our PostDoc program which are determining our plans and actions: Drive cutting-edge science, new concepts and technologies; enrich Boehringer Ingelheim's innovation ecosystem with highly motivated, young fellows, who will help to build on science to develop new medicines; and train the next generation of leading scientists
- Our campus community culture is great for sharing ideas and makes it easy to access technologies, meet experts, and approach leaders of all levels. There's a great spirit of freedom, fluidity, and fierce collaboration.
- Interactions are sound and informal. It's not particularly hierarchical, more team-based with a start-up attitude. We are always keen to help and speak up, open to positive change and new ideas that support our mission to improve lives.
- Our Speak-Up policy is an important part of our Code of Conduct. Only this way we can continuously develop and improve as a company.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is an integral part of Boehringer Ingelheim's identity; a key element of our culture and contributes to our 'Sustainable Development – For Generations'.
- Our core values of empathy, respect, passion and trust nurture a diverse, collaborative, open and inclusive environment which is key to innovation, value creation and sustainable growth. With the inclusion of various experiences, backgrounds and characteristics, Boehringer Ingelheim creates an openness to different approaches, solutions and perspectives, all contributing to create "Value through Innovation".

*Please note: The offered position initially covers a duration of 24 months with an option for extension by another 12 months.