



The banner features logos for Universität Leipzig (Medizinische Fakultät), Universitätsklinikum Leipzig (Medizin ist unsere Berufung), and DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft / German Research Foundation). The central text reads: **MD-LEICS**, **Modern Diseases LEipzig**, **Clinician Scientist program**, and **Fellowship Call 2024**. A red circular logo on the left contains a stethoscope and the text 'MD-LEICS'. On the right, a photo shows a female scientist in a lab coat and safety glasses working in a laboratory. Below the photo is the source: 'Source: Leipzig University, Photo: Colourbox'.

Young physicians are invited to apply for the 3-year Clinician Scientist program of the Leipzig University funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

The combined clinical and scientific program focusses on translational research in the field of modern diseases (e.g. metabolism, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cardiometabolic complications, eating disorders). Investigating non-communicable “Modern Diseases” is a central topic of the Faculty of Medicine of the Leipzig University. The aim of MD-LEICS is to sustainably promote Clinician Scientists in modern diseases through protected research time (50-75%) and an attractive structured curriculum for interdisciplinary clinical and scientific qualification. The research time is approved as Residency and Fellowship Training (30 out of 36 months) by the State Chamber of Physicians of Saxony (Ärzttekammer).

Scientific aims

The MD-LEICS program aims to

- ❖ Characterize predisposing and protective factors contributing to pathogenesis of modern diseases on population and individual level.
- ❖ Identify vulnerable periods and windows of opportunities to prevent or successfully treat modern diseases across the lifespan.
- ❖ Develop scalable, novel strategies for detection, prevention, and therapy of modern disease, based on the understanding of risk factors and mechanisms.
- ❖ Translate recent advances in basic sciences into innovative clinical applications for the management of modern diseases.

Qualification concept and Mentoring

Through the MD-LEICS program, we provide interdisciplinary clinical and scientific qualification and access to cutting-edge research facilities and state-of-the-art labs. The qualification concept comprises four elements:

- ❖ Scientific qualification in modern diseases

- ❖ Clinical education / residency, partly (30 out of 36 months) credited towards Residency and Fellowship Training by the State Chamber of Physicians of Saxony
- ❖ Research rotation with protected research time
- ❖ Professional skills training

To ensure a balanced clinical, scientific, and academic career development for the Clinician Scientists, the program is integrated in a multidisciplinary mentoring concept. Within the MD-LEICS program, each Clinician Scientist will have continuous mentors (scientific/project mentor, external mentor, and head of the department of the host institution).

Gender equality and balance of family life

All MD-LEICS institutions provide a work, research, and study environment that promotes equal opportunities and a family-friendly work-life balance. We are committed to create a work- and training-space that fosters all project staff to start a family and care for family members. We do this by supporting a family-friendly environment (e.g. flexibility in working hours, services to help find childcare onsite with dedicated nursery services and emergency childcare options available) and offering career development specifically tailored towards women scientists (topics include presentation and negotiation skills, networking, balancing research, clinical care and family commitments, and leadership training). During maternity protection and parental leave, projects can be extended based on a written application. Parental leave during MD-LEICS is encouraged, and research projects can be extended if requested by the respective clinician scientists during parental leave. Furthermore, part-time work is facilitated (up to 50% reduction of the clinical part). In case of maternity protection, parental leave, and/or child/elder care, student assistance/research assistance can be requested, and a rapid review process of the steering committee will allocate financial resources for short-term positions.

MD-LEICS Fellowships

Applicants:

We are offering **four fellowships** to physicians with a research background and focus on Modern Diseases (e.g. metabolism, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cardiometabolic complications, eating disorders). Applicants will undergo clinical specialty training at Leipzig University Medical Center in Modern Diseases (preferably in Cardiology, Endocrinology, Laboratory Medicine, Pediatrics, or Psychosomatic Medicine).

Eligibility criteria are a **medical degree** and a **completed doctorate degree/submitted doctoral thesis** (equivalent to MD or MD/PhD; for applicants who have submitted, but not yet completed, their doctorate degree, proof of submission, as well as a signed letter from the Principal Supervisor stating the prospects of success, is required). **Key selection criteria** include applicant's qualification and publication record, preferentially on modern diseases, as well as project feasibility, scientific quality and novelty, and strategic fit. Applications from candidates from abroad or other universities are highly welcome. There is no age limit in MD-LEICS. The program is open also for part-time employees (up to 50% reduction at the clinical part). All applicants agree to spend 36 months in total (100%) in the program.

Funding:

A contractually agreed share of 50%-75% of the total working time is exclusively protected for scientific

qualification and research. There is no fixed corset on how to allocate this share over the 3-year program to ensure flexible adaptation to the participants needs, advance in academic track and special aspects of the clinical specialization. With the application, however, the applicants, as well as the mentors and heads of institutes, have to provide a proposed schedule. We do encourage a 6-month full time starting period for scientific qualification to establish the basis for the independent research project.

The host institutions need to certify the suitability of clinical training for Residency and Fellowship Training to avoid possible delays in the clinical qualification track. To facilitate this aim, directors of the main MD-LEICS-supporting institutions participate in the program and guarantee that research time is being approved as Residency and Fellowship Training. According to an agreement of the Faculty of Medicine with the State Chamber of Physicians of Saxony (Ärztchammer), 30 out of 36 months can be credited towards Residency and Fellowship Training.

Payment is based on the MantelTVÄ UKL for 3 years. The employment relationship continues to be 100% with the Leipzig University/Leipzig University Medical Center. For external applicants, we strongly encourage to contacting the respective desired PI prior to submitting the application to discuss the feasibility of the proposed project.

Funding includes:

- ❖ full salary per TVÄ for 3 years
(80% funded by the program and 20% covered by the PI's institute/clinic)
- ❖ attendance of two national and one international scientific meeting
- ❖ support by graduate assistants
- ❖ costs for two publications
- ❖ *if applicable:* off-hour child care service and childcare opportunities at meetings

Application

Application forms can be found [here](#).

In order to prepare your application please make sure to compile the required information in one single PDF document. The online-only application (to be written in English) should include:

- ❖ Application form (including motivation letter, curriculum vitae, publication list, project proposal*, nomination of potential mentors [can be handed in later])
- ❖ Copy of degree certificates (Medical degree certificate, Approbation certificate, Doctorate certificate, for candidates with submitted, but not completed, doctoral thesis: proof of submission, as well as a signed letter from the Principal Supervisor stating the prospects of success)
- ❖ Letters of support from the head of the host institute/hospital department confirming access to resources for the proposed project and protected research time of at least 50% (optimally 75%), and assumption of 20% of the personnel costs

*Candidates are strongly encouraged to contact the desired PI to discuss potential projects before applying.

The Leipzig University and MD-LEICS promote equal opportunity in line with DFG standards for gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and affirmative action plans for women. Where applicants are equally qualified, preference is given to candidates with disabilities or equivalent.

Please send your complete application (in English) as one PDF file to:

Selection Process

The Clinician Scientist Program offers four fellowships per year supported by the German Research Foundation for national and international Clinician Scientists through a competitive recruitment process.

All applications are reviewed by a selection committee. To ensure that fairness doctrine and the ideal of impartiality are applied to each application, two *ad hoc* reviewers evaluate the application in addition. Where applicants are equally qualified, preference is given to candidates with disabilities or equivalent.

STEP 1: All submitted documents are checked for completeness and compliance with formal requirements.

STEP 2: Evaluation of scientific project proposals. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the potential supervisor for their desired project (a brief list of research areas of the six possible PIs can be found below) prior to applying to discuss potential projects on modern diseases.

STEP 3: The best candidates from step 2 evaluation will be invited for hearing (approx. 2-4 weeks after application deadline). Evaluation considers scientific quality and novelty, realizability, propensity for future extramural funding, strategic fit, applicants qualification and publication record. Criteria are transparently applied in a highly standardized manner.

STEP 4: Applicants will be informed about the outcome of the selection process shortly after the hearing.

Timeline:

- ❖ **November 15 – December 31, 2023:** Application period: applications are accepted until December 31st
- ❖ **January 2024:** Selection process
- ❖ **Mid-January 2024:** Invitation of successful candidates.
- ❖ **February 5, 2024:** Interviews
- ❖ **Mid-February 2024:** Final decision is communicated.
- ❖ **April 1, 2024:** Start of funding

Potential supervisors

The attached list provides a brief overview of potential supervisors for MD-LEICS projects. We strongly encourage all applicants to contacting the respective supervisor prior to applying to discuss project feasibility.

Potential MD-LEICS supervisors	Expertise
Prof. Matthias Blüher	Obesity, diabetes, Metabolic syndrome
Prof. Berend Isermann	Laboratory Medicine, complications of modern diseases
Prof. ⁱⁿ Anette Kersting	Psychosomatic medicine, incl. obesity
Prof. ⁱⁿ Antje Körner	Pediatric obesity and cardiometabolic diseases
Prof. Ulrich Laufs	Clinical translational research in cardiology, lipidology
Prof. Michael Stumvoll	Obesity, diabetes, Lipodystrophy, Insulin resistance