



# Australia-Spain Network for Innovation and Research Excellence

## Guide for Evaluators

January 2026

## Executive Summary

This document provides practical information on the evaluation process for the open postdoctoral positions of the AuSpire Program. AuSpire will recruit 28 researchers following an open, transparent, merit-based, impartial, and fair recruitment procedure in line with the principles set out in [the European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#).

For more information on the Program and open positions, please visit the website <https://auspire.eu/>

## Document history

Issue date	Version	Changes made/reason for this issue
05/02/2025	1	Publication for Call 1
01/04/2025	2	Publication for Call 1 (extended deadline)
01/12/2025	3	Published for Call 2
21/01/2026	4	Publication for Call 2 (extended deadline)

## Disclaimer

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union nor the European Executive Research Agency can be held responsible for them.

## Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to our colleagues at RMIT Europe, the coordinators of the MSCA COFUND AUFRANDE, REDI, and DREAM+PLAN projects, for their invaluable support and insights to AuSpire and this Guide.

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## 1. About AuSpire

The Australia-Spain Network for Innovation and Research Excellence (AuSpire) is a highly ambitious interdisciplinary researcher training program that links Spanish and Australian research communities through Postdoctoral Fellowships.

AuSpire seeks to recruit excellent postdoctoral researchers of any nationality, age, gender and background from around the world for its industry-led positions. 28 postdoctoral positions will be offered, following an open, transparent, merit-based, impartial and fair recruitment procedure in line with the principles set out in [the European Charter for Researchers](#) and [the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#).

A common theme of Planetary Wellbeing will underpin the workshops and overall training program to ensure that outputs from the research, innovation and co-creation activities offer true value to society and a positive impact on our planet's inhabitants and ecosystems.

AuSpire is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 101177949.

## 2. Evaluation Principles

The process for the selection of the Applicants to AuSpire open positions will be extensive and transparent, with the aim of attracting the most talented and motivated researchers from around the world.

Before starting the evaluation processes, all Evaluators must sign a letter of commitment, declaring possible conflicts of interest<sup>1</sup> and agreeing to confidentiality and impartial assessment of all applications. They will be required to read the Guide for Evaluators, the Guide for Applicants, the program description on the AuSpire website (<https://auspire.eu/>), and watch the video recording of the briefing session organised by the AuSpire Team on 21 March 2025. This is to ensure that all Evaluators are fully equipped with the correct information and to answer any questions they may have.

The AuSpire Program Management Team will oversee the entire evaluation process, liaising with the Panel Chairs and participating in consensus meetings where Evaluators will discuss and determine Applicants' rankings to ensure that requirements are fulfilled.

Evaluators are prohibited from contacting Applicants during the evaluation process, discussing the evaluation outside the Panel and revealing the identities of the Evaluators.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a conflict of interest if the Evaluator has a direct benefit, a close personal or professional relationship with applicant; any other situation that compromises impartiality or casts doubt, or that could reasonably appear to do so.

### 3. Role and Appointment of Evaluators

A specific Selection Panel will be established for each position that holds the responsibility of evaluating, ranking, and selecting eligible Applicants. Each Selection Panel will be comprised of at least 4 Evaluators and will maintain its composition throughout the entire selection process unless a member changes due to a conflict of interest arising or force majeure. Each Panel should appoint a Chair to be in charge of coordinating the process and reporting on the Panel's decision.

Panels will be formed to achieve optimal balance and diversity with respect to gender, impartiality, intersectoral, and international representation:

- Gender balance and gender diverse: 50% female representation across the panels;
- Impartial: 1-1 external to internal ratio, i.e., one External Evaluator per AuSpire Supervisor; the External Evaluators must be external to the consortium and based outside Spain;
- Intersectoral: representatives from academic and non-academic sectors;
- International: at least three nationalities represented;
- Diverse and relevant expertise in the disciplines involved in the research challenge proposed;
- No conflicts of interest declared

### 4. Overview of the Selection Process

Step 1	>> Step 2	>> Step 3	>> Step 4	>> Step 5	Onboarding
Online application	Administrative eligibility check	Evaluation and first ranking of Applicants	Interviews	Final ranking and allocation of fellowships	Onboarding of PFs
Applicants submit their application through the online portal ( <a href="#">SlideRoom</a> ).	The AuSpire Program Management Team will check that the application complies with requirements and meets the eligibility criteria.	For each position, all Evaluators will assess, evaluate and rank the eligible applications, according to the Evaluation Criteria outlined in Table 2. The Selection Panel will shortlist up to 6 Applicants for an interview.	Each Selection Panel will conduct the interview of shortlisted Applicants for a position, and assess, evaluate and rank the Applicants according to the criteria listed in Table 3.	Each Selection Panel, supported by the AuSpire Team, will agree on the final ranking, selected and reserved Applicants. The AuSpire Program Management Team will communicate results to the Applicants.	Selected applicants will formalise their employment contract at the Employing Entity in Spain.
Before 03 February 2026	January - February 2026	February 2026	March - April 2026	end of April 2026	from May - June 2026

Table 1: Evaluation timeline for AuSpire second call for Applicants

The relevant steps for Evaluators (from step 3 to 5) are covered below:

## Evaluation of eligible applications (step 3)

All applications successfully passing the eligibility check (step 2) will be assessed by a dedicated Selection Panel. Evaluators will assess each application individually against the Evaluation Criteria detailed in Table 2, directly on the designated application platform ([SlideRoom](#)). In case of considerable discrepancy (>25%) between individual scores, the Selection Panel may meet via videoconference to resolve areas of contention. The AuSpire Project Manager may also be consulted to help reach consensus or to invite an additional Evaluator to review the application.

Applicants may select up to 3 positions in their application form. Where Applicants have applied and been assessed as eligible for more than 1 position, the assessments will proceed simultaneously for all.

Criteria	Score	Weighting (%)
Previous research experience and scientific achievements	0–5	30
Proposed research plan (pertinence, originality, feasibility)	0–5	30
Public awareness and outreach (communication activities)	0–5	20
Supporting statements (referees and motivation letter)	0–5	20
Weighted Average	0–5	100
<b>Scoring guide:</b> 0 – Fail. The application fails in these criteria or cannot be judged due to incomplete information. 1 – Poor. The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner. 2 – Fair. The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses. 3 – Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are required. 4 – Very Good. The application addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible. 5 – Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.		

Table 2: Criteria and weighting to be used by Evaluators for scoring of Applications (first ranking)

After all evaluations have been completed on SlideRoom, a first ranking for each position will be produced based on average scores granted by the Evaluators. Where Applicants obtain the same score, priority is given to those with the highest scores in higher weighted criteria. All being equal, priority is given to female Applicants.

The Selection Panel will set a cut-off score for passing to the next round (3.5 out of 5 as a standard) and shortlist top-ranked Applicants for an interview (up to 6 Applicants per position). Exceptions on the cut-off score may be discussed, if at least 3 Applicants are not selected or if the Panel decides to ensure the position will be filled.

## Interview (step 4)

Interviews of the shortlisted Applicants will be organised by videoconferencing. Applicants shortlisted will be informed at least 5 days before the interview.

Interviews will be conducted by all Evaluators of the Selection Panel who will assess the Applicants against the Evaluation Criteria detailed in Table 3. The interviews will be composed of:

- A 20-minute presentation by the Applicant detailing their background and research experience as well as an explanation of the research proposal prepared, motivation for applying, and the impact expected on their career. The presentation can be supported by visuals (e.g. PowerPoint).
- A 25-minute question and answer session.

Criteria	Score	Weighting (%)
Scientific and investigative aptitude and motivation	0–5	30
Research proposal: conceptual understanding of relevant subject matter	0–5	30
Professional skills: planning, problem solving, IT, data management,	0–5	20
Interpersonal skills: communication, teamwork, initiative, autonomy	0–5	20
Weighted Average	0–5	100
Scoring guide: 0 – Fail. The application fails in these criteria or cannot be judged due to incomplete information. 1 – Poor. The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner. 2 – Fair. The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses. 3 – Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are required. 4 – Very Good. The application addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible. 5 – Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.		

Table 3: Criteria and weighting to be used by Evaluators for scoring interviews

Each Evaluator will score the interview individually and scores will then be averaged to give the overall interview score. Immediately after each interview, the Evaluators will deliberate the scores and agree on the feedback comments to be sent to the Applicant.

## Final ranking and allocation of postdoctoral positions (step 5)

A final ranking will be produced after the interviews are completed. Where Applicants obtain the same score, priority is given to those with the highest scores in higher weighted criteria of the interview round and then the first ranking. All being equal, priority is given to female Applicants.

# 5. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

All Evaluators must sign the commitment letter, declaring no conflicts of interest with the evaluated position. Should a conflict arise at any time in the process, Evaluators must immediately inform the AuSpire Team who will arrange for a substitute to the Evaluator declaring the conflict of interest.

The signed commitment letter also declares that Evaluators will maintain confidentiality of all Applicants' personal information and other information provided. All Evaluators must respect the confidentiality of the information disclosed in the evaluation process, both written and verbal.

## 6. Contact

RMIT Europe is coordinating the AuSpire Program. For any inquiries or information that cannot be found in the Guide for Evaluators, the Guide for Applicants or on the official AuSpire website (<https://auspire.eu/>), contact the AuSpire Helpdesk ([auspire.help@rmit.edu.au](mailto:auspire.help@rmit.edu.au)).



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Co-funded by  
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