



READ

Research Expertise from
the Academic Diaspora

Application Guidelines for the READ Fellowship Program (Albanian Diaspora Scholars)

The READ Program Overview

In 2021, Albanian—American Development Foundation (AADF), in coordination with the Institute of International Education (IIE), has established the Albanian Diaspora Fellowship Program called Research Expertise from the Academic Diaspora (READ) Program. READ is a 7-year project that will connect Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Albania with the Albanian scientific diaspora and their respective academic institutions. The program is built on AADF’s strategic priorities in education, especially in the higher education system. As diaspora engagement initiatives have been sporadic, AADF will play a leading role in establishing a well-structured path for channeling contributions of the scientific diaspora in ways beneficial to the Albanian HEIs. The READ Fellowship Program will benefit from the existing networks of AADF and other initiatives in higher education such as CleanScore, Center for School Leadership, and Junior Achievement of Albania.

This program offers a unique opportunity to address the untapped potential of the Albanian intellectual diaspora in ways that would enhance capacities and bring about structural changes in the Albanian higher education system. The READ Fellowship Program will address this gap by setting up a *catalytic model* for Fellows and Albanian HEI alike to benefit from creative collaborations. On the one hand, READ will allow diaspora scholars to make a meaningful contribution to Albania. On the other hand, the program will strengthen the capacities of Albanian HEIs by making full use of the valuable skills and experiences of the diaspora.

The READ Fellowship Program provides a formalized and structured fellowship program through which the Albanian academic diaspora can contribute to the development of HEIs in Albania and the overall development of scientific research in the country. READ will offer short-term fellowships (from one to six months) to highly qualified diaspora scholars (Albanian-born and second-generation Albanian) in OECD countries to pursue capacity-building collaborative research projects at Albanian HEIs. The Fellowship will contribute to Albania’s research output and will connect Albanian academic institutions with peers abroad. It will also help Albanian

researchers access research grants from different donors by training them in grant application and project design skills.

The program is designed on the successful model of diaspora fellowships implemented and administered in collaboration with Institute of International Education (IIE). READ supports Albanian collaboration among Albanian HEIs and diaspora scholars through four main activities: **collaborative research, joint supervision of PhDs, curricula and course development, and co-teaching.**

The three key program objectives are: **Sustainability**—sustainable collaborations between diaspora scholars and Albanian HEIs while fostering the opportunity for new collaborations and increasing access to research funding; **Institutional Capacity Building**—educational projects in collaborative research, curriculum offerings, graduate programming, and PhD mentoring; **Community Engagement**—knowledge production, international collaborative networks, and increased visibility and engagement with Albanian HEIs.

To enable institutions to seamlessly launch, implement, and scale collaborative activities with diaspora scholars, the framework of the diaspora fellowship programs includes the following key elements:

- An Advisory Council comprised of thought leaders from the Albanian diaspora and researchers from HEI in Albania that will select priority fields of academic scholarship aligned with national interests and demands in human capacity development.
- Universities identify their needs for new curriculum and research in priority academic fields and propose projects for international academic collaboration.
- Scholars from the diaspora express interest and are matched with projects based on expertise and mutual interest.
- Selected scholars carry out short-term fellowships at the universities to complete the projects and co-teach and mentor undergraduate and graduate students.
- Scholars and universities participate in alumni engagement activities and convenings to enhance the fellowship experience for future cohorts, contribute to the program's sustainability, and continually identify areas for collaboration.

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I. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DIASPORA SCHOLARS

You must possess **all** of the following qualifications in order to be eligible for the READ Program.

- ✓ Albanian citizenship, born in Albania or the child of a person with Albanian citizenship. Albanians from Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, etc. are eligible to apply.
- ✓ Ph.D. or equivalent degrees
- ✓ More than 5 years of working experience at a university, research center or hospital in OECD countries, within the last 10 years.
- ✓ Record of publications in leading scientific journals
- ✓ Proficiency in Albanian language or English appropriate to the proposed lecturing or research activities to be carried out in Albania.

Preferred criteria:

- ✓ Track record of building partnerships to strengthen Albanian higher education (ex previous joint teaching or research work)
- ✓ Knowledge of the Albanian higher education sector, including critical areas of study and Albanian higher education organizational structure and policy. (optional)

II. NATURE OF FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowships are awarded for a period of 1 to 6 months, in person or a hybrid of in-person/virtual. READ Fellows receive the following benefits:

- International travel costs and local transportation;
- Living stipend to cover living expenses while in Albania;
- \$150 per working day honorarium; and
- Health insurance (accident and sickness protection).

A grant may be revoked, terminated, or suspended. Grounds for revocation or termination include, but are not limited to: (1) violation of any law of the Republic of Albania; (2) failure to observe satisfactory academic or professional standards; (3) physical or mental incapacitation; (4) engaging in any unauthorized income-producing activity; (5) failure to comply with the grant's terms and conditions.

A grant may be suspended if (1) the grantee ceases to carry out the project or academic program during the grant period or (2) the grantee leaves Albania without authorization of the READ Program.

III. SCHOLAR APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

- Rather than apply directly to a project or with a research proposal, Diaspora Scholars submit their applications to join a Roster. The Scholar Application asks Diaspora Scholars to submit their qualifications for the READ Program, and the academic and

research interests they would like to pursue while on a READ Fellowship. READ supports collaborative research, joint supervision of PhDs, curricula and course development, and/or co-teaching.

- Diaspora Scholar applications to the Roster are accepted on a rolling basis.
- Albanian Resident Scholars at Albanian HEIs submit Projects Requests during each competition cycle. These project submissions request a Diaspora Scholar and contains the academic discipline, activities and timing.
- Diaspora Scholars who submit complete Scholar Applications for the Roster are notified by READ Program if matched to a project. Projects may either name a specific individual, or request READ to search the Roster for an appropriate candidate.
- Roster candidates are not required to accept the matched project, and in the case of multiple matches, the Albanian Resident Scholar may choose from among several possible candidates.
- Only Diaspora Scholar Applications on the Roster which are successfully matched to a Project Request are sent into the review process. Initial screening is done by the AADF and IIE, followed by peer review.
- Final selection of all Fellows is made by the READ Advisory Council.
- Selected Diaspora Fellows will be provided with orientation sessions and asked to develop a work plan with the Albanian Resident Scholar and host institution before the arrival in Albania.

IV. DEVELOPING A PROJECT WITH AN ALBANIAN RESIDENT SCHOLAR

READ is a two-sided application process requiring a Project Request submitted by an Albanian Resident Scholar at an Albanian HEI, and the credentials of an Albanian Diaspora Scholar submitted to the Roster. In many cases, READ anticipates that Diaspora Scholars are in contact with colleagues at HEIs in Albania and will collaborate on the project details submitted by the Albanian Resident Scholar. READ encourages this kind of cooperation, although it does not increase the likelihood of selection in comparison to projects without such prior cooperation.

V. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- All items must be in English.
- The Scholar Application is online and any uploaded documents must be typed or computer-generated. Use 12-point or larger type. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

1. Personal & Professional Information

- A. Full Name (Give your name exactly as it appears on your passport).
- B. Country of current residence
- C. Country of citizenship
- D. Country of second citizenship (if applicable)
- E. Date of Birth (Month/Day/Year)

- F. Place of birth
- G. Phone:
- H. E-mail address (primary and alternate):
- I. Home address:
- J. Gender:
- K. Current Position and Start Date, Department/Office, Institution
 - a. Name of Institution
 - b. Department
 - c. Title and Start Date
- L. Most Significant Professional Accomplishments, honors and awards and up to three significant publications
- M. ORCID number (optional)

B. Research focus

2. Which activities sponsored by READ are you interested in pursuing at an Albanian host institution? Select all that apply. Combining other activities with co-teaching is considered an advantage.

- Collaborative research (joint research paper and/or joint research project),
- Joint supervision of PhDs,
- Curricula and course development, and
- Co-teaching.

3. Field of expertise (dropdown menu)

Select one discipline from the list below that best describes your general area of expertise, and enter it exactly as it appears in the list. (dropdown)

4. Subfield (dropdown)

5. Areas of Academic Interest: Short Answer (Up to 500 words)

C. Personal Statements

6. Why do you want to be part of this Program? (Up to 200 words)

7. What potential contributions would you be able to make at an Albanian institution? (Up to 200 words)

8. What impact in the long- and short-term would participation in READ have on you, your current work and your home institution? (Up to 500 words)

9. Self-Assessment of English Proficiency (excellent, good or fair) reading, writing, speaking.

D. Curriculum Vitae (6 page maximum)

When composing a curriculum vitae, it is important to include:

- * Education (universities attended, degrees earned and dates received)
- * Positions held
- * Courses taught and other services provided to students and the home institution
- * Publications (provide full citations and list them starting with the most recent)
- * Other professional activities, such as workshops, seminars and consultations
- * Membership and activities in professional associations
- * Professional honors, awards and fellowships
- * Community service

E. Recommendation Letter from chair of department/ institute/Dean (or higher)

F. Copy of Passport. This should indicate your place of birth in Albania. If you were born elsewhere, please include a document that provides proof of Albanian heritage.

VI. CHECKLIST

Please check each box to confirm your submission of the following:

- Completed application form
- Upload CV
- Recommendation Letter from Dean (or higher)
- Proof of Albanian heritage (i.e. passport)

VII. OUTREACH ASSESSMENT

Please let us know how you heard about READ Program:

- Friend/colleague
- Poster/flyer
- READ website
- Social media
- University in Albania (if selected, please specify the name of the university)
- Other (please specify)