Program Brochure Aspasia 2021

Aspasia is linked to the NWO Talent Program Vidi round 2021.
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1 Introduction

This program brochure explains the application process for the Aspasia 2021 funding round. This program brochure is the responsibility of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). In this program brochure, you will find information about the background, goal and budget of this program (chapter 1), the purpose of the program (chapter 2), the guidelines for applicants (chapter 3) and the procedure of the Aspasia procedure (chapter 4). Finally, in chapter 5 you will find contact information.

1.1 Background

The number of women in senior scientific positions still lags behind men: at the end of 2019, 23.1% of Dutch professors were women. Although recent years have seen a slow growth in the proportion of women in science, a proportional male/female distribution is not expected until 2042. The Aspasia program aims to accelerate the promotion of women scientists to associate professorships.

Aspasia is linked to the NWO Talent Program (formerly de Vernieuwingsimpuls). NWO has decided to award grants to institutions that promote female Vidi applicants who were rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' to the position of associate professor within one year.

Who was Aspasia?

Aspasia was a Greek philosopher who lived from 470 to 410 B.C. She was born in the Greek city of Miletus (located in present-day Turkey), the daughter of an educated man who gave her a good education. As a young woman, she left for Athens, where she was classified as a "foreigner" in the class of "hetairen. Hetairen were usually developed and independent women. According to various sources (Plato, Plutarch), Aspasia taught rhetoric and Socrates attended her classes.

1.2 Available budget

The grant ceiling for this program brochure totals €2,976,000.

If this budget is not sufficient to award the premium to all Aspasia candidates who meet the conditions, an additional measure will take effect. This measure means that responses from the Executive Board, indicating whether or not they intend to promote the Aspasia candidate in question, will be considered for the premium in order of entry. For details on this order-of-entry procedure, see Section 4.2, Nomination to Executive Board

1.3 Validity program brochure

This program brochure is valid for female applicants from the NWO Talent Program Vidi round 2021 with the official decision in 2022.
2 Goal of the program

2.1 Goal

The Aspasia program aims to accelerate the promotion of women scientists to the rank of associate professor (UHD).
3 Directives for candidates

3.1 Who can apply

It is not possible to submit an application within the Aspasia program on your own initiative; Vidi applicants who may be eligible will be approached by NWO (see Chapter 4 for more information on the procedure).

3.2 Who can be nominated

Eligible applicants include both female Vidi applicants who have been honored (laureates), and female Vidi applicants who have been rated as “very good” or “excellent” after interviews, but who have not been awarded a Vidi grant (candidates). The grant is exclusively for the promotion of female Vidi applicants who were not yet associate professors at the time of the date of the Vidi award letter. Applicants who were already associate professor at the time of submission of the Vidi application will not be approached. Also, applicants who have been promoted to associate professor in the period between the time of submission and the date of the Vidi result letter are not eligible for the Aspasia premium (see also section 3.5 for premium conditions).

For more information, see Chapter 4, Procedure

The premium is €40,000 for the promotion of Vidi laureates. For the promotion of Vidi candidates who have not been honored, the premium is €120,000. The latter group thus receives no grant from the NWO Talent Program Vidi round, but does receive a higher Aspasia premium. The premium is awarded to the institution to which the nominated Aspasia candidate is promoted.

Depending on the decision of the institution's Executive Board, the premium can be spent on salary supplements or can be added to the Aspasia laureate’s research budget in appreciation of her achievement and in addition to any grant already awarded. This budget will broaden her possibilities to do research (for example by appointing an extra postdoc or research assistant, a teaching free period and/or a period of research at a foreign university) and can in this way also stimulate other female scientists to apply for a grant.

If the Executive Board decides that part of the grant will benefit the Aspasia Laureate herself, NWO will award that part of the grant directly to the Aspasia Laureate (for Vidi Laureates in addition to the previous Vidi grant). This is subject to the spending conditions of the NWO Talent Programme.

3.3 When can you be nominated

After deciding on the award of Vidi grants, NWO contacts the applicants who are eligible for an Aspasia grant. If the applicant agrees, NWO nominates her to its Executive Board for promotion. For details and a timeline of the procedure, see Chapter 4 of this brochure.

3.4 Program terms

Aspasia 2021 is linked to the NWO Talent Program Vidi Round 2021 and is exclusively for the promotion of female Vidi applicants who were not yet associate professors at the time the Vidi award letter was signed Aspasia round 2021

3.5 Grant conditions
Aspasia Round 2021

- Female Vidi applicants must have been promoted to Associate Professor with permanent employment or at least a five-year contract within one year of the date of the announcement of the results of the Vidi round, i.e. no later than June 28, 2023. This promotion period will not be deviated from, except for Vidi applicants to whom the exception below applies and for Vidi applicants who are entitled to maternity leave during this period (the extension applies to the number of weeks that the Vidi applicant is entitled to maternity leave within the promotion period). In special cases, such as long-term illness, an extension of up to six months may be granted after consultation with NWO. The scope of employment after promotion must be at least equal to the scope of employment that the Vidi applicant had at the time of the date of the Vidi result letter. The Executive Board should submit a contract to NWO showing the promotion (see also Chapter 4, Procedure).

- For female Vidi applicants who were not yet in permanent employment and/or employment as an assistant professor on the date of the Vidi results letter, a modified two-step rule is possible as an exception: they must in that case be appointed as assistant professors (permanent employment or at least a five-year contract, minimum size 0.4 FTE) within 2.5 years of the decision date of the Vidi round (i.e. no later than 28 December 2024) and as associate professors (permanent employment or at least a five-year contract, minimum size 0.4 FTE) within three years of the decision date of the Vidi round (i.e. no later than 28 June 2025). In this case, the premium is awarded in parts: one third of the premium is awarded after the appointment as assistant professor (€ 13,000/€ 40,000 depending on the size of the premium) and two thirds of the premium is awarded after the appointment as associate professor (€ 27,000/€ 80,000). The award of the first part of the premium is not dependent on whether or not the promotion to UHD is ultimately achieved within the set time frame and conditions.

- Vidi applicants who are affiliated with KNAW or NWO institutes or other institutions from which scientists can submit a Vidi application may also be eligible for the Aspasia grant. They should then be promoted to a position equivalent to the position of UHD, whereby salary and seniority will be considered. This will be determined in consultation between NWO and the institution concerned. In these cases the institution should contact NWO after receiving the nomination - and thus before any promotion - about this. Persons who already hold a position equivalent to the position of UHD are not eligible for the premium. For the rest, the same conditions apply as for all Aspasia grants (see section 3.3 of this brochure).
4 Procedure

4.1 Contact with Vidi-applicants

In mid-September 2022, NWO contacts the Vidi applicants who may be eligible for the Aspasia grant (see also Sections 3.1 and 3.2). NWO requests the employment contract that is valid at the time of the date of the Vidi award letter to check whether the applicant indeed meets the conditions. If no response from the applicant has been received by NWO by 14:00 CET on 31 October 2022, the file will be closed and the offer of the grant will expire.

4.2 Nomination to the Executive Board

If the Vidi applicant meets the requirements and would like to be promoted under Aspasia, NWO will contact the Executive Board of his/her institution in early November 2022. Within the response period (see in section 4.4 the timeline), the Executive Board submits a letter via aspasia@nwo.nl indicating whether it intends to propose the relevant Vidi applicant for promotion.

Conditions for responses by the Executive Board

There are some conditions attached to the responses from the Executive Boards:

1. All responses by Executive Boards to nominations for Aspasia must be sent by email to the Aspasia email address aspasia@nwo.nl. Only e-mails that contain a letter from the Board and are signed by an authorized entity will be processed.

2. Responses to nominations for Aspasia should be submitted one at a time (per candidate). Bulk responses from Executive Boards (bundling responses to multiple nominations within 1 letter) will not be considered.

3. Only responses received by NWO within the response period, between Tuesday 22 November 2022 12:00 CET and 15 February 2023 12:00 CET, will be considered.

Processing in order of entry

If the total budget required for promotion of all Aspasia candidates exceeds the available budget of €2,976,000, then responses from Colleges of Management will be considered for the premium in order of receipt. If a response from a College of Management qualifies based on this order, the premium will be conditionally awarded and the College of Management will receive a letter about it. The premium amount of €40,000 or €120,000 will be transferred after the promotion has taken place within the premium conditions mentioned in paragraph 3.5. If a response from a Board of Governors is not eligible for the premium because the budget has already been exhausted, the Board of Governors will be notified by NWO. If no response from the Executive Board has been received by NWO after 15 February 2023 12:00 CET, the offer of the premium will expire and the file will be closed.

4.3 Granting of premiums

NWO will disburse the conditionally awarded grant upon receipt of a contract evidencing the Aspasia candidate’s promotion and an accompanying letter from the Board of Directors (or, if the grant is awarded to the Aspasia Laureate, from the Aspasia Laureate) detailing the desired expenditure of the grant. The spending plan must include at least a budget and a brief explanation.
Within six months after the deadline of the applicable promotion period, the documents showing that the promotion has been realized must be submitted from the Executive Board (see the timeline in Section 4.4). If these documents have not been received within the stipulated period, the conditions have not been met and, consequently, the conditionally awarded bonus will be withdrawn.

4.4 Timeline Aspasia 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2022</td>
<td>Announcement of Vidi Results Round 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid September 2022</td>
<td>NWO sends the official invitations to the female Vidi applicants eligible for the Aspasia grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 31st, 2022, 14:00 CET</td>
<td>Deadline for response by female Vidi applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First week November 2022</td>
<td>NWO sends a request to the Executive Boards for promotion of female Vidi applicants who want to be considered for the Aspasia grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 22 November 2022 12:00 CET</td>
<td>Start of reaction term for reactions Executive Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 15, 2023 12:00 CET</td>
<td>Deadline responses Executive Boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of February 2023</td>
<td>NWO notifies candidates and Executive Boards whether responses will be considered</td>
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If the Executive Board accepts the nomination for promotion and the response has been processed by NWO

**Normal procedure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2023 (at the latest)</td>
<td>Promotion of Aspasia candidate to associate professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 28, 2023 (at the latest)</td>
<td>Notification of promotion of Aspasia candidates to associate professor by Executive Board with budget plan to NWO</td>
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**Two-step procedure**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 28, 2024 (at the latest)</td>
<td>Promotion of Aspasia candidate to assistant professor (first step) professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2025 (at the latest)</td>
<td>Notification of promotion of Aspasia candidates to assistant professor by Executive Board with budget plan to NWO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2025 (at the latest)</td>
<td>Promotion of Aspasia candidate to associate professor (second step)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 28, 2025 (at the latest)</td>
<td>Notification promotion second step of Aspasia candidates to associate professor</td>
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4. Contact information

5.1 Contact

For questions about this Call for proposals, please contact:

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