

SIMONS FOUNDATION

Mathematics & Physical Sciences

Simons Investigators

Request for Nominations

The Simons Foundation's Mathematics and Physical Sciences division invites nominations for Simons Investigators in Mathematics, Physics, Astrophysics and Theoretical Computer Science.

Rationale: The Simons Investigators in Mathematics, (Theoretical) Physics, Astrophysics and Theoretical Computer Science program aims to provide a stable base of support for outstanding scientists, enabling them to undertake long-term investigations of the fundamental theoretical questions in their fields. The intent of the program is to support these scientists in their most productive years, when they are establishing creative new research directions, providing leadership in the field and effectively mentoring junior scientists.

Level and Duration of Funding: Investigators are appointed for an initial period of five years. Renewal for an additional five years may be considered, contingent upon the evaluation of scientific impact of the Investigator. Renewal beyond the ten-year period will not be considered. Appointments will begin August 1, 2017.

An Investigator award provides \$100,000 per year in research support for the Investigator and \$10,000 per year to the Investigator's department. The award will be administered through the Investigator's institution, which will receive an additional 20 percent per year in indirect costs.

An Investigator position may be interrupted and resumed for reasons that would normally justify a leave from a university, such as illness, the need to care for family members or time off for national service. Periods of sabbatical or research leave do not count as interrupting the Investigator position. Support may be withdrawn at any time at the discretion of the foundation, but it is expected that termination of the grant at times other than five or ten years would occur only in very rare cases.

Allowable Expenses: The funding provided to a Simons Investigator may be used at the Investigator's discretion to support research expenses in the following categories:

- Up to one month of summer salary and related benefits per year for the Investigator.
- Salary support and related benefits, including tuition support, for postdoctoral, graduate or undergraduate research assistants.
- Domestic or international travel for the Investigator and the Investigator's

- postdoctoral and graduate students.
- Short- or long-term visitors and/or collaborators, including travel, meals and lodging expenses.
- Research equipment, supplies and other expenses directly benefiting the research, including computers, computer support, publication expenses and professional membership dues.

Expenditures in other expense categories may be possible but must be approved in advance by the foundation. Investigator funds may not be used for sabbatical salary support or teaching relief of any kind.

Funding provided for the Investigator's department should be used at the discretion of the department chair to provide support for seminars, visitors, refreshments and related expenditures that benefit the research activities of the department. Funds may also be used to subsidize meals for faculty, students and visitors. In addition, these funds may be used to help pay for furniture and research infrastructure such as copiers, computer servers and computer support. The department is expected to provide appropriate administrative support to the Investigator.

Unspent Funds: The foundation's intent is that the award be administered to allow the maximum flexibility in pursuit of scientific goals. To this end, with the exception of salary and fringe benefits for the Investigator, unspent funds are automatically carried over from year to year during the period of appointment, allowing for larger expenditures in some years. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to pre-spend a portion of the award.

Requests for accelerated disbursement will be considered by the foundation, subject to approval by the director of the Mathematics and Physical Sciences division and to budget availability. Investigators may apply for a no-cost extension for funds unexpended at the conclusion of the appointment.

Reporting: Tentative five-year spending plans will be due from the Investigator by December 1, 2017.

A financial statement and a brief activity report, summarizing research results achieved, people supported, talks given and papers published, will be required from the Investigator annually, due within 60 days after the end of each grant year.

The foundation will conduct a review of the Investigator award prior to the end of year five, to determine if the Investigator will be appointed for an additional five years. The Investigator will be evaluated on the basis of the promise of continued research activity during the renewal term year; the information in the yearly activity reports and the cumulative year four report will be important in this decision.

Eligibility: To be an Investigator, a scientist must be engaged in theoretical research in

mathematics, physics, astrophysics or computer science and must not have previously been a Simons Investigator. He/she must have a primary appointment as a faculty member at an educational institution in the United States, Canada or the United Kingdom, on a campus within these countries and the primary department affiliation must have a Ph.D. program (note that the appointment need not be in a mathematics, physics, or computer science department). At the time of the appointment start date, an Investigator should be tenured.

The foundation reserves the right to determine eligibility, but, generally, a “primary appointment” is defined as one where the Investigator is a full-time employee of an academic institution with a teaching load that is comparable to that of other faculty members in the same department. Investigators may transfer their award to a new educational institution within the United States, Canada or United Kingdom, subject to approval from the foundation and the old and new institutions. The award will be interrupted or terminated, at the foundation’s discretion, if an Investigator takes up a primary long-term position at (i) a research institute, national laboratory or other institution outside the United States, Canada or United Kingdom, or another campus of their current institution, which falls outside the United States, Canada or United Kingdom, (ii) a for-profit organization (iii) or accepts a major administrative responsibility that significantly reduces the time available for research.

Investigators are not eligible to hold a Simons Fellowship for the duration of the Simons Investigator award.

Investigators are expected to attend annual meetings, held at the Simons Foundation each fall, to discuss their activities. Costs associated with attending this meeting will be covered by the foundation.

Number of Awards: In 2017, the foundation expects to appoint up to four Investigators in mathematics, up to five in physics, up to two in astrophysics and up to three in theoretical computer science.

Nomination Procedure: The foundation asks each university to submit nominations confidentially, **up to two nominees for each of the three fields**. Nominees must be submitted through an online process via proposalCENTRAL (pC) (<https://proposalcentral.altum.com/default.asp>). The deadline to submit nomination applications is **October 31, 2016, at 11:59:59 p.m. EST**.

We ask that nominations for the Investigators in Mathematics, Physics, Astrophysics and Theoretical Computer Science programs be treated confidentially – the nominees should not know they are being nominated, if possible.

Nomination applications must be submitted by an institutional representative via his/her pC account in coordination with the appropriate institutional officials and policies. **Please refer to the attached “Simons Investigators Nomination Instructions for Math, Physics, Astrophysics and Computer Science 2017” for further information on and requirements for submitting the nominee’s nomination material.**

Required Nomination Materials include:

- Nomination Letter (two-page limit) written and signed by the nominator (someone other than the nominee) explaining the distinctive scientific contributions of the nominee, focusing on scientific accomplishments of the past five years and including discussion of a few important papers. The nominator does not have to be at the nominee’s institution.
- The nominee’s curriculum vitae, including Ph.D. year, institution, advisor, postdoctoral institutions and advisors, positions held subsequent to award of doctorate and the nominee’s up-to-date publication list.
- 501(c)(3) equivalency determination letter from the IRS for international institutions, if available.

Please note: Nominations submitted via email or by the nominee will not be considered.

The foundation expects to notify nominees of the decision by May 31, 2017.

Important Dates:

Nomination Deadline	Notification	Award Start Date
October 31, 2016	May 31, 2017	August 1, 2017

Contact Information:

mps@simonsfoundation.org

Elizabeth Roy
Senior Program Manager
Mathematics and the Physical Sciences
212-524-6966
eroy@simonsfoundation.org