

## Applying for Jobs in Europe

Following the feature in the September 2018 issue on applying for jobs in the US, we invited three colleagues to offer some tips on applying for jobs in France, Poland and Sweden.



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When looking for positions in Europe, Poland could be one of your options. There are several strong mathematical groups in Poland. In addition to the variety of universities throughout the country, there is also the Institute of Mathematics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IMPAN). Its base is in Warsaw, and it has smaller branches in other cities in Poland. Although there may be some calls for postdoc positions in some of the universities, this is unfortunately rather rare these days.

However, IMPAN has regular open calls for postdoc and associate professor positions. In particular, there are usually two calls for postdocs every year, one in winter (usually in January) and one in spring (usually in May). These are several  $\frac{1}{2}$ -2 year positions in the research groups at IMPAN. More specifically, the call in spring is aimed at young researchers with at most two years of postdoc experience. This call welcomes PhD students who are about to obtain their PhD degree too.

The best thing to do is to contact a member of IMPAN who has similar research interests to you, and express your interest. There are groups working on a variety of research areas including Algebra and Algebraic Geometry, Differential Equations, Dynamical Systems, Functional Analysis, Number Theory and Topology. Your application needs to include a research plan and you should indicate a member of IMPAN under whose guidance you will work should you obtain the position.

Moreover, there are frequent calls for 3-7 year assistant/associate professor positions, designed for experienced researchers, which give you the opportunity to create your own research group, or to join

one of the existing ones. You will find information about the institute at [impan.pl/en](http://impan.pl/en).

Please note that you will usually need to send by post all the documents required for the application, so it would be a good idea to prepare your application well before the deadline.

From time to time there are also some calls for positions — both postdoc and permanent (at the level of associate professor) — associated to specific projects.

One thing to keep in mind is that the positions at IMPAN are not advertised on many well known websites. So if you are interested you should keep an eye on [impan.pl/en/events/competitions](http://impan.pl/en/events/competitions).



**Olof Sisask** is a Senior Lecturer in Mathematics at Uppsala University, with interests in Fourier analysis, combinatorics, probability and number theory.

Finding and applying for jobs in mathematics in Sweden is for the most part a fairly straightforward process, with one or two perhaps unusual aspects.

Job openings usually turn up on the website Nordic-Math-Job ([tinyurl.com/ycthzp4](http://tinyurl.com/ycthzp4)), which lists links to job adverts at many of the research-active institutions around Sweden. International applicants are welcome; most institutions offer their job adverts in both Swedish and English, and the working research language is usually English. One normally has 2 years to get on top of Swedish for jobs that involve teaching. The types of positions available are typically postdocs, tenure-track lectureships, tenured lectureships and professorships. Postdocs almost always have a maximum duration of 2 years.

The application process itself is usually fairly straightforward, involving the usual combinations of CVs and research and teaching statements, usually in English, but usually no letters of recommendation.

Some institutions require a certain application template to be used, which can make the process more time consuming.

The most noteworthy aspect of the whole process perhaps lies in how applicants are assessed. After the deadline, the department will usually appoint a panel consisting of 3–4 external referees (often from outside Sweden) to assess all the applications. These will narrow the list of applicants down to a top group of about four people who get called to a trial lecture and interview. The external panel is present for these, and then produce a final ranking of this top group. The department is then to a large extent expected to appoint the panel's top-ranked candidate.

The written assessments produced in this process are usually sent to all the applicants afterwards, or are available upon request.

One can also apply for research funding from various sources in Sweden, whether one is already at an institution in the country or not — but the grants are usually to be hosted at a Swedish institution. The main source is Vetenskapsrådet (see [vr.se](http://vr.se)), the Swedish Research Council, who have deadlines a couple of times a year. They offer funding for up to four years for various types of positions and projects. Tenured lecturers in Sweden are expected to apply for this funding on a regular basis, in order to fund their research time, which tends not to be budgeted for in the departmental funding to the same extent as in the UK.



**Marthe Bonamy** is a CNRS researcher at LaBRI in Bordeaux, with interests in graph theory and graph algorithms.

France has a reputation for loving exceptions. It is no surprise, then, that the academic

market can be baffling at first. As an early-career researcher, you can get two types of permanent positions: *Maître(sse) de conférences* (university-based position with 192 hours of teaching per year, the rest devoted to research and various duties) or *Chargé(e) de recherches CNRS* (national research-only position)<sup>1</sup>.

In the first case, speaking French fluently is unsurprisingly a requirement in most places. While the attractiveness of such a position varies a lot depending on the university (better students, better amenities, or fewer duties to share between the faculty members), there is one unusual nationwide feature to the recruitment process. Prior to applying for any such job, one needs to obtain a “qualification”, which has to be requested in October roughly a year before the desired starting date. All the information can be found here: [cnu27.iut2.upmf-grenoble.fr](http://cnu27.iut2.upmf-grenoble.fr) (in French, as part of the fluency test). Please note that there are many different sections corresponding to various fields, and that you may well be eligible for more than one (for example, in my community of combinatorialists, it is not uncommon for someone to be “qualifié” for sections 25, 26 and 27). It is worth keeping an open mind about which sections to apply for. The job openings are all available through the not very user-friendly website *Galaxie*<sup>2</sup>.

In the second case, speaking English is sufficient. There are even examples of long-time *chargés de recherche* CNRS still having barely more than survival skills in French, though of course that may dampen the experience. A CNRS researcher is always part of the workforce of a university, but there is significant flexibility regarding switching universities. Very casually speaking, the CNRS hires researchers then lends them to partner labs. Thankfully, a researcher is only ever reassigned at their request. The application process usually starts in early January for possible starting date on 1<sup>st</sup> October, see the website [cn6.fr](http://cn6.fr) for more info. Note once again that there are different sections, though they are independent from the ones previously mentioned (people I collaborate with are typically part of sections 6 or 7).

In both cases, one factor which cannot be overestimated is obtaining strong local support. For CNRS, you need to suggest three labs that you could be sent to, and actually justify how your research proposal will fit there: each of the labs sends a letter discussing the different candidates that expressed interest in being sent to them. These ties should ideally be developed more carefully than through an email shortly before the deadline — it is often good to visit and give a seminar, or at least to have extensive discussions over email or Skype. Once they are convinced that they want you as a colleague, they will most probably help you navigate the often confusing French system (I promise that you can survive it!).

<sup>1</sup>Let us also mention Inria, another institute similar to CNRS, though dedicated to more applied areas of Computer Science

<sup>2</sup>Available through the [cnu27](http://cnu27) webpage