



Research Expertise from the Academic Diaspora (READ) Program Program Overview and Advisory Council Selection Guidelines

About the READ Program

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, CSL, and JAA.

This program offers a unique opportunity to address the untapped potential of the Albanian intellectual diasporas in ways that would enhance capacities and bring about structural changes in the Albanian higher education system. The Diaspora 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 scientific diaspora can contribute to the development of Higher Education Institutions 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 scholars from diaspora (Albanian-born and second-generation Albanian) scholars in OECD countries to pursue educational 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.

Key elements of the READ program

The program is designed on the successful model of diaspora fellowships implemented and administered by IIE. The four main areas that Albanian HEIs and diaspora scholars will collaborate through the READ Fellowship Program are **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 diaspora selects 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 for curriculum development or joint research 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.

Eligibility criteria for Advisory Council Members

As a core component of the program design, the Research Expertise from the Academic Diaspora (READ) Program will establish an Advisory Council (AC). The AC will be comprised of thought-leaders from Albanian diaspora scholars who will leverage the energetic and growing movement of Albanian diasporic academic engagements and reflect the vision and needs of the Albanian higher education community. The Advisory Council will determine the strategic visioning related to thematic areas and the final approval of READ projects and will consist of four members. AC Members will be selected based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Leading academics in their respective disciplines;
- ✓ Members of the Albanian diaspora or currently residing in Albania;
- ✓ In-depth knowledge of the Albanian higher education sector, including critical areas of study and Albanian higher education organizational structure and policy;
- ✓ Ability to build partnerships for the strengthening of Albanian higher education;
- ✓ Familiarity with the context of Albanian Diasporic waves;
- ✓ More than 15 years of working experience in Higher Education Institutions in developed countries (work experience in Ivy league institutions and titles would be an advantage) or more than 20 years of working experience in Higher Education Institutions in Albania; and
- ✓ With integrity and dedicated to the commitments required by the Advisory Council tasks.

Function and commitment of Advisory Council

- ✓ Meets virtually or in-person up to twice a year (for about four days) for defining the selection priorities and the final selection of the fellows from the diaspora and research grants from Albanian HEIs;
- ✓ The AC members will receive in advance detailed guidelines for the selection process and further instructions related to the needs of Universities in Albania;



- ✓ Members should promote the program in their networks/institutions and be visible for the outreach of the program;
- ✓ Advise on strategic vision and make recommendations on program operations;
- ✓ Analyze post-cycle evaluations to make recommendations on beneficial changes to future cycles;
- ✓ Members serve a term of two years. At the end of the two years, IIE will review members currently serving on the AC and, as appropriate, invite members to serve another term. No member is to serve more than two consecutive terms; and
- ✓ Members will receive an honorarium.

Interested candidates should send their Curriculum Vitae to the following address: READ@iie.org and j.lamaj@aadf.org. Applicants will receive confirmation that their submission was received. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview.

The deadline for application is November 15, 2021 at 12 am, EET