

# Guidelines

## Research Units



Disclaimer: The English translation of this document is provided for informational purposes. In the event of a discrepancy between the English and the German versions, the German text takes precedence.

**Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft**

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## **I Programme Information**

### **1 Objective**

Funding for a Research Unit enables outstanding researchers to collaborate closely on specific medium-term projects whose anticipated findings could not be achieved within individual grants programmes. Furthermore, measures tailored specifically to the Research Unit are pursued in order to promote researchers in early career phases and also equity and diversity. A Research Unit typically has fewer than ten projects which are coordinated to enable work on a common research topic. The majority of research projects should be university-based.

### **2 Proposals**

#### **2.1 Eligibility**

A proposal for a Research Unit is prepared jointly by several researchers and submitted by the spokesperson. Researchers must work at a university or non-university research institution in Germany or at a German research institution abroad and have completed their academic training (usually with a doctorate). Projects should aim to achieve an appropriate level of participation of female researchers corresponding to their general representation in the relevant subject area.

Researchers from outside the German research system may be involved if their project is of added value to the Research Unit at large. This must be explained in the draft proposal and in the proposal.

Researchers who work at an institution that is not non-profit, or one that does not allow immediate publication of research findings in a generally accessible form, are not eligible to apply.

## 2.2 Format and deadline

A draft proposal must first be submitted before a Research Unit may submit a proposal. If successful, the DFG will invite the applicants to submit an establishment proposal. Draft proposals and establishment proposals may be submitted at any time. For more detailed information on preparing your proposal, please consult the instructions for proposals to establish or renew Research Units.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_03](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_03)

Proposals for the individual projects within the Clinical Research Unit should be submitted according to the instructions for project proposals.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_01](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01)

## 3 Duration

For draft proposals and full proposals submitted prior to 1 October 2018, and for full proposals based on draft proposals submitted prior to 1 October 2018, note the following: The total funding duration is generally six years, or eight years in exceptional cases. The first funding period is generally three years. Further funding requires the submission and approval of renewal proposals.

For draft proposals and full proposals based on draft proposals submitted as of 1 October 2018, note the following:

The total funding duration is generally eight years. The first funding period is generally four years. Further funding requires the submission and approval of renewal proposals.

## 4 Participants

The Research Unit consists of the leaders of the individual projects. One of the project leaders assumes the role of spokesperson and agrees to coordinate the proposal. The spokesperson represents the Research Unit toward the DFG and third parties. They are required to submit reports to the DFG. The spokesperson should be a full-time university teacher at a higher education institution (university or university of applied sciences) in Germany.

Particular requirements apply to the Research Unit's spokesperson with regard to their scientific track record, experience in leading projects (including projects funded by third

parties), and integration and leadership skills. These criteria will be considered during the review process.

The spokesperson is responsible for managing the central project funds, especially those for coordination.

## **II Proposal Modules**

To apply for funding in the Research Units programme, the project leader may submit the modules listed below. For more details, please see the respective guidelines for each module.

### **1 Basic Module**

Use the basic module to request funding for direct project costs, project-specific staff, and instrumentation necessary to carry out the research project.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_01](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_01)

### **2 Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators**

If you would like to propose a position for yourself as the leader of this project, use this module to request funding for your temporary position as principal investigator.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_02](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_02)

### **3 Replacements**

If your project requires that you be released from teaching or administrative duties, you can use this module to request funding for a replacement to take over these responsibilities.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_03](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_03)

**The following modules can be submitted by the project leaders for the individual projects in conjunction with the modules above, or by the spokesperson for the entire Research Unit within the coordination proposal:**

### **4 Professorships**

To support the Research Unit, a professorship may be established at one of the participating institutions, with advance and/or partial funding by the DFG. Such funding must

enable an early professorial appointment or the implementation of a structural improvement.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_10](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_10)

## **5 Temporary Substitutes for Clinicians**

If this project requires that clinicians conduct research, you can use this module to request funding for temporary substitutes to take over their patient-care responsibilities.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_04](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_04)

## **6 Project-Specific Workshops**

If you would like to conduct workshops for your projects or for the entire Research Unit, you may request funding to help you do so.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_06](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_06)

## **7 Mercator Fellows**

This module enables you to pursue an intensive and long-term exchange with researchers in Germany and abroad. Fellows will partially be on site but will remain in contact with the Research Unit even after their stay.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_05](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_05)

## **8 Public Relations**

To enable you to present your work to the general lay public, you can request funding for public relations.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_07](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_07)

**The following modules can only be submitted by the spokesperson on behalf of the entire Research Unit within the coordination proposal:**

## 9 Coordination

This module enables the spokesperson to

- apply for the funds needed to coordinate the various projects and work within the network (coordination funding), and, irrespective of that, to
- apply for gender inclusion funding for individual and subject and/or project-related activities serving to facilitate the spokesperson's new role in conjunction with being in an underrepresented gender at the project management level in the relevant field or discipline.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_12](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_12)

## 10 Network Funds

Use this module to request funds for the entire network.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_13](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_13)

## 11 Start-Up Funding

Through this module, research networks can receive funds to help promising researchers in early career phases pursue independent projects.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_11](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_11)

## 12 Standard Allowance for Equity and Diversity

This module can be used to request funds for targeted and project-specific or, in this case, network-specific measures to promote gender equality for researchers and diversity in research and to make jobs in science and academia more family friendly (including care).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_14](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_14)

Up to €15,000 per funding year may be requested as a lump sum for this purpose.

### **III Special Provisions**

#### **1 Projects abroad**

Collaboration with researchers based outside Germany is possible within a Research Unit. Direct project funds from the basic module (travel funds and funds for guests) can be used for this purpose, for example, as can the Mercator Fellows module.

Inclusion of projects by researchers in Luxembourg, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano (South Tyrol), Austria and Switzerland is possible on the basis of special agreements. As a general rule, these projects must be funded by the respective partner organisations involved.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_015](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_015)

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_017](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_017)

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_018](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_018)

It is possible to fund projects in other countries if they promise to add value to the entire Research Unit and they meet the same high research standards as apply in Germany.

#### **2 Association of Emmy Noether Groups**

Research Units may associate Emmy Noether Groups that investigate related topics. In this case, the Research Unit proposal and the Emmy Noether proposal should refer to one another. Decisions on both proposals will be made independently of each other. If both the Research Unit and the Emmy Noether Group are established, the Emmy Noether Group Leader will participate in the Research Unit's shared events. The association can also be established afterwards at the spokesperson's discretion.

#### **3 Role of participating institutions**

Funds must be allotted in such a way that core support - especially laboratory/office space, as well as set-up and running costs - is covered by the institution's own funding sources. For Research Units with a local focus, the value of the unit to the host university or institution should also be reflected in the scope and extent of the core support provided.

## 4 Transfer projects

Transfer projects are projects involving direct cooperation with industrial partners. Their objective is to bring basic research conducted at universities and industrial research closer together. The following conditions apply:

- There must be firm evidence of mutual benefit, rather than a one-way transfer of knowledge.
- Basic research must remain the prime focus of the university project. Therefore, the standard review criteria apply.
- The industrial partner must submit a funding proposal, which is also assessed by the review panel.

The industrial partner must bear the costs for its own contribution; the sharing of any profits arising from the research must be established in advance, and this agreement may not put the university at any disadvantage. The project findings must be published appropriately; it is possible to delay publication subject to prior agreement.

## IV Obligations

In submitting a draft proposal or proposal to the DFG, you

1. agree to adhere to the **principles of good research practice**.<sup>1</sup>

The principles of good research practice include, among others: maintaining professional standards, maintaining strict honesty with regard to one's own contributions and those of third parties, documenting results and rigorously questioning all findings.

2. recognise the DFG's **Rules of Procedure for Dealing with Scientific Misconduct** (Verfahrensordnung zum Umgang mit wissenschaftlichem Fehlverhalten – VerfOwF)<sup>2</sup> as legally binding.

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<sup>1</sup> The principles of good research practice can be found in detail in the [DFG Code of Conduct - Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice](#) and in the [Funding Guidelines: General Terms and Conditions of DFG Grants](#) (DFG form 2.00).

<sup>2</sup> [DFG Rules of Procedure for Dealing with Scientific Misconduct, DFG form 80.01](#)



In the draft proposal stage, the spokesperson obtains signed Declarations of Obligation of Compliance from all designated individual project leaders

[www.dfg.de/formulare/80\\_02](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/80_02)

and keeps these on file for ten years following submission of the draft proposal. Should allegations of scientific misconduct arise, upon request the spokesperson will forward the relevant declaration to the DFG Head Office.

Scientific misconduct is defined as the intentional and grossly negligent statement of falsehoods in a scientific context, the violation of intellectual property rights or impeding another person's research work. The circumstances of each case will be considered on an individual basis. In cases where scientific misconduct has been established, the DFG may impose one or more of the following sanctions in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, depending on the nature and severity of the scientific misconduct:

- issuing a written reprimand to those involved;
- exclusion from the right to apply for DFG funds for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
- revoking funding decisions (full or partial termination of the grant contract, demanding repayment of funds spent);
- demanding that those concerned either retract the discredited publications or correct the falsified data (in particular by publishing an erratum), or appropriately indicate the DFG's retraction of funding in the discredited publications;
- exclusion from serving as a reviewer for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
- exclusion from membership in DFG bodies and committees for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
- denying voting rights and eligibility in elections for DFG bodies and committees for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct.

By accepting funding, the recipient agrees to

3. use the grant exclusively and in a targeted manner to realise the funded project. The use and accounting of funds must conform to the relevant regulations of the DFG.
4. submit progress reports on the research according to the dates specified in the award letter and to present financial accounts to the DFG detailing the use of funds.

The DFG expects that the findings of the projects it funds be made available to the public.

## **V Data Protection**

Please note the DFG's Data Protection Notice on research funding, which can be viewed and downloaded at [www.dfg.de/privacy\\_policy](http://www.dfg.de/privacy_policy). If necessary, please also forward this information to those individuals whose data will be processed by the DFG due to their involvement in your project.

[www.dfg.de/privacy\\_policy](http://www.dfg.de/privacy_policy)