

Guidelines

Knowledge Transfer Projects in Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups



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.

I General Information

Knowledge transfer projects in Research Training Groups are usually based on preliminary work funded by the Research Training Group and serve to test in practice the research findings in the pre-competitive area – in collaboration with an application partner (a commercial enterprise or non-commercial/non-profit institution) from Germany or abroad – and develop them into prototypes or exemplary applications, as part of doctoral thesis projects. A transfer project should be closely linked to the Research Training Group, thus benefiting the Research Training Group and the doctoral researchers involved in the project.

Knowledge transfer projects in Research Training Groups

- whose establishment proposals were decided on by November 2021 can be requested for a duration of up to three years.
- whose establishment proposals were decided on in May 2022 or later can be requested for a duration of up to four years.

Transfer projects should be closely linked to the duration of the Research Training Group.

The core of the project is a **joint work programme**, focusing on intensive mutual exchange of scientific knowledge on the one hand, and corresponding application issues on the other hand.

Appropriate **input by the application partner**, especially in the form of human resources and research participation, is expected. Funds for the application partner cannot be requested.

Knowledge transfer with industrial/commercial application partners

For collaborations with commercial partners, the results of the planned projects must be in the pre-competitive range.

Knowledge transfer with the public sector or non-commercial application partners

Cooperation projects with non-commercial application partners allow collaboration with private non-profits as well as the public sector. Examples include government agencies, associations, foundations, museums, and community institutions. The application partner must make an appropriate number of employees available to work on the work programme.

Cooperation agreement

All legal matters, especially regarding publications and rights to the results generated, must be laid down in a cooperation agreement (DFG form 41.026).

www.dfg.de/formulare/41_026

The DFG provides a model cooperation agreement. Deviations from this model cooperation agreement must be approved by the DFG. The cooperation agreement must be signed by authorised signatories of the respective contractual partners and must be available at the time of proposal submission.

Proposals

A proposal for a knowledge transfer project in a Research Training Group may be submitted either together with the renewal proposal for the second funding period or as a supplemental proposal while the Research Training Group is in progress. When submitting a proposal, the results of the Research Training Group to date are regarded as DFG-funded preliminary work.

Review and decision

Knowledge transfer project proposals are reviewed as part of renewal proposals. If a supplemental proposal is submitted, the suitable form of review is determined case by case. The funding decision is made by the Grants Committee on Research Training Groups.

II Proposal Instructions

Preliminary note

Please note the following instructions:

- Per knowledge transfer project, the proposal, excluding cover page and appendix, may not exceed 15 pages in length (DIN A4, font Arial 11pt or similar, single-spaced, printed on both sides).
- When proposing one or more transfer projects together with a renewal proposal, submit the knowledge transfer project proposal as an appendix to the renewal proposal.
- For supplemental proposals: One copy of the proposal is to be submitted to the DFG Head Office via the elan portal, bearing the original signature of the applicants.
- Please note the “Guidelines for Reviewing Transfer Projects in Research Training Groups” (DFG form 1.310).

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_310

- If, in preparing your proposal, you used artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of generative models for text and image creation, please disclose this fact in a scientifically appropriate manner in your proposal. For more information, see the [“Research Integrity” portal](#).

1 General Information on the Knowledge Transfer Project

- Title in German and English
- Duration:
State the proposed duration of the transfer project. If the duration is to be less than 36 months, please explain how doctoral researcher funding up to degree completion will be ensured.
- Project leader:
Please name the project leader, stating the full name and exact work address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and (if applicable) web address, as well as the relevant subject area.
- Application partner:
Please name the application partner, stating the full name and address of the business or institution; the contact person(s) in charge, including name, position, complete work address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and (if applicable) web address; as well as the relevant subject area.

Please list the objectives of the business or institution as they relate to the project’s research goals and, based on this, describe the reasons that led to the choice of the application partner.

- **Summary in German and English:**
Summarise the key objectives of your project in plain language (max. 3,000 characters each). This summary will be used to inform the DFG's interdisciplinary decision-making bodies and the general public (e.g. through the DFG's annual report).

2 Project Description

Please address the following points:

- **State of the art:**
Explain the relationship between your project and the current state of research concisely and precisely. Clearly indicate throughout the proposal when you are referring to the work of other researchers (even if you collaborated in the work yourself as a co-author). The absence of any indication may constitute a breach of good research practice, and in individual cases may constitute scientific misconduct according to the Rules of Procedure for Dealing with Scientific Misconduct (VerfOwF).
- **Preparatory work/research report:**
Describe your own relevant prior research and/or developments.
- **Work programme:**
Please describe your plan of action (for experimental projects: experimental design) for the duration of the proposed project. Of special importance are benchmarks for the overall project with measurable success criteria.
Explain how the project provides opportunities for one or more doctoral theses.
- **Integration of the knowledge transfer project into the Research Training Group:**
Please explain how the project will have an impact on the Research Training Group and how the integration of the transfer project will benefit the Research Training Group's doctoral researchers.
- **Integration of doctoral researchers working on the transfer project:**
Please explain how and by what criteria doctoral researchers will be recruited and how they will be included in the Research Training Group's qualification programme and supervision strategy.

- Legal agreements:

Please explain the legal agreements

- regarding the further use and publication of data and results generated in the Research Training Group by (post-)doctoral researchers and incorporated into the transfer project, and
- regarding the further use and publication of data and results generated in the transfer project by (post-)doctoral researchers.

- Handling of research data:

If your project uses, generates and/or processes data, then use this section to record key information on the handling of this data (and any underlying objects). For more information, please refer to section 2.4 of DFG form 54.01 “Proposal Preparation Instructions – Project Proposals”.

www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01

- Relevance of sex, gender and/or diversity:

Where applicable, please describe whether and to what extent sex, gender and/or diversity is relevant to the research project (methods, work programme, objectives, etc.). For more information, please refer to section 2.5 of DFG form 54.01 “Proposal Preparation Instructions – Project Proposals”.

www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01

- Ethical and/or legal aspects of the project:

Taking into account the relevant discipline-specific standards and ethical regulations, indicate whether you anticipate any risks and/or harm to individuals or groups and/or the potential for other negative effects that might be posed by your research. If so, how do you intend to address these issues?

If you plan to conduct investigations on humans, human materials or identifiable data, investigations involving experiments on animals or projects involving genetic resources from a foreign country, please explain briefly and note the relevant requirements and obligations. The same applies in the event that there are indications in your research programme or any parts thereof that it could yield knowledge, products or technology that might directly be misused to cause substantial harm (*Dual Use Research of Concern*). For more information, please refer to section 4.1 of DFG form 54.01 “Proposal Preparation Instructions – Project Proposals”.

www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01

3 Requested Funds

Funds can be requested only for the research partner. Under a knowledge transfer project, only funding for positions, but not for fellowships, may be requested for doctoral researchers.

The funds are made available per fiscal year. Initially, funding is awarded for the first fiscal year and announced for subsequent years. **The funds granted are earmarked and tied to the current fiscal year (= calendar year); any other use of the funds or a carryover of the funds into the next fiscal year is not permitted. Funds expire if not claimed for the transfer project by the end of the relevant fiscal year.** For guidelines on accounting and the use of funds, please refer to the usage guidelines for Research Training Groups (DFG form 2.22, in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22

Please justify all funding requested, if necessary by referring to other passages in the proposal, and fill in the summary tables.

Transfer projects in Research Training Groups can be applied for with the **Research Training Group Module** (DFG form 52.15). This module can be used to request funding for staff and direct project costs in support of structured training programmes for researchers in early career phases.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_15

Programme-specific instructions on 1.1 (Doctoral Researchers)

Doctoral researchers in transfer projects can only be funded as staff positions.

Funding for positions can be requested under the category “Doctoral Researcher or Comparable”. The proposed working hours must be at least 50% of a full-time position, and may be up to 100% of a full-time position if the competitive situation requires it. For more information, see DFG form 55.02 (available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/55_02

The DFG generally grants funding for staff in the form of standard amounts. For rates and other details, consult the table in DFG form 60.12.

www.dfg.de/formulare/60_12

Funding for doctoral researchers as part of an establishment proposal for a Research Training Group

- that was decided on by November 2021 can be requested for up to three years.
- that was decided on in May 2022 or later can be requested for the standard 36-month period or up to 48 months where justified.

- Please state the number of doctoral researchers to be funded, the requested funding duration for the position(s), and the working hours as a percentage of full time.

- Please justify briefly (referring to the work programme as needed) the proposed number of doctoral researchers.

Programme-specific instructions on 1.3 (Postdoctoral Researchers)

Funding for postdoctoral researchers may be proposed as staff positions in well-justified exceptional cases. The Grants Committee on Research Training Groups suspended this funding option until further notice by resolution dated 15 November 2024.

Programme-specific instructions on 1.4 (Qualifying Fellowships)

Qualifying fellowships cannot be funded in a transfer project.

Programme-specific instructions on 1.5 (Student Assistants (Support Staff))

Support staff should be introduced in a targeted manner to independent scientific working practices in the Research Training Group. Please describe how they will be integrated into the research programme and, if applicable, into any research projects already planned, as well as into the qualification programme. Their work in the Research Training Group should not prolong their studies; they should therefore work no more than 10 hours per week. Work schedules in excess of 10 hours per week must be specially justified.

- Please give the number of support staff (student assistants) to be funded. State the total amount requested, the planned number of monthly working hours, the length of employment for each position, and the hourly pay rate (according to applicable state or federal law) upon which your calculations are based.

- Taking into consideration the instructions above, describe the involvement of the support staff (student assistants) in the Research Training Group, or refer to the relevant part(s) of the proposal.

Programme-specific instructions on 2. (Funding for Direct Project Costs)

For each category of requested funding for direct project costs (Research Training Group Module 2.1 to 2.6), please state the amount of funds required, how the funds will be used, and how the amount has been calculated.

Programme-specific instructions on 2.2 (Travel)

In a transfer project, funding for travel costs can be requested only for doctoral researchers.

Programme-specific instructions on 2.3 (Visiting Researchers)

Funding for lectures or visits by highly qualified researchers cannot be proposed under a transfer project and should instead be requested or financed via the Research Training Group.

Programme-specific instructions on 2.5 (Other)

Funding for announcements and recruiting, project-specific language training, communication training, presentation training, media training, or other project-specific courses to teach key skills cannot be proposed under a transfer project and should instead be requested or financed via the Research Training Group.

Programme-specific instructions on 2.6 (Publications)

Funding for publications cannot be requested under a transfer project.

Tables: Summary of items submitted for funding

Please remember that the funds are tied to specific fiscal years and cannot be carried over to subsequent fiscal years.

Table 1:

Staff	Hours as percentage of full time	Number	Duration (from – to)
Module Research Training Group:			
Doctoral researcher or comparable			

Table 2 (please enter amounts):

	20XX from [month]	20XX	20XX	20XX	20XX	20XX through [month]	Total
Module Research Training Group:							
Support Staff (Student Assistants)							
Equipment up to € 10,000, Software and Consumables							
Travel							
Experimental Animals							
Other Costs							
Total							

4 Application Partner's Contribution

Please address the following points:

- Application partner's contribution:
The application partner is expected to contribute a fair share to the proposed project. Similar to your presentation of the funding requested from the DFG, describe what resources (funding, staff, equipment, etc.) the application partner will contribute to the project. Note that appropriate core support must be available to the project at the application partner's facilities.

- Application partner's involvement in the qualification programme and supervision strategy:
Describe the added value for the (post-)doctoral researchers directly involved in the transfer project as well as for all other Research Training Group members.

5 Signatures

The proposal must be signed by the project leader and by the person responsible at the application partner institution. Supplemental proposals additionally require signatures by the university administration and by the spokesperson of the Research Training Group.

Appendix I: Publications and Bibliography for the Research Programme

Please note the instructions regarding appendix I in the "Proposal Instructions for Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups" (DFG form 54.05).

www.dfg.de/formulare/54_05

Appendix II: Academic Curriculum Vitae of the Project Leader

Please note the instructions regarding appendix II in the "Proposal Instructions for Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups" (DFG form 54.05).

www.dfg.de/formulare/54_05

Appendix III: Cooperation Agreement

All legal matters, in particular those regarding the commercial exploitation and/or the publication of research results, must be settled by a cooperation agreement with all relevant partners. This agreement must be submitted along with the proposal and will be reviewed by the DFG Head Office. A model agreement (DFG form 41.026) is available at

www.dfg.de/formulare/41_026

III Obligations and Data Protection

In submitting the proposal, you

1. agree to adhere to the **principles of good research practice**.¹

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)² as legally binding.

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);

¹The principles of good research practice are presented in detail in the [DFG Code of Conduct Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice](#).

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

- 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

- 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.
- 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.

Please note the DFG's Data Protection Notice on research funding, which can be viewed and downloaded at 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