

Guidelines

for the Review of Draft Proposals for Clinical Research Units

I Programme Information

Funding for a Clinical Research Unit enables outstanding researchers to collaborate closely on specific medium-term projects whose anticipated findings could not be achieved within individual grant programmes. The thematic focus of a Clinical Research Unit is on basic, disease-oriented or patient-oriented clinical research.

In addition, funding is intended to help improve clinical research by creating and strengthening research-oriented structures within university hospitals, supporting the performance-oriented allocation of resources, establishing or enhancing training structures, supporting early career researchers, advancing the scientific profiles of individual medical departments and intensifying cooperation between clinicians and those engaged in basic research.

A Clinical Research Unit typically has fewer than ten projects which are coordinated to enable work on a common research topic.

A Clinical Research Unit is primarily run by university hospitals and institutes at one location. It is made up of project leaders and project members. One researcher assumes the role of spokesperson. This person should be a full-time university teacher. In addition, the Clinical Research Unit is headed by a research coordinator, who is either appointed to or currently holds a research professorship and who is responsible for the scientific and administrative management of the unit.

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This individual must meet particular requirements with regard to his/her scientific track record, experience in leading projects, and integration and leadership skills.

Applicants must first submit a draft proposal to the DFG, which then undergoes review. If successful, the DFG will invite the applicants to submit a full proposal.

The total duration of funding is generally six years; the first funding period is usually three years. Continued funding may be applied for with a renewal proposal (see the Guidelines for Clinical Research Units – DFG form 50.08).

www.dfg.de/formulare/50_08/

Please note:

General Guidelines for the Written Review (DFG form 10.20) are available at:

www.dfg.de/formulare/10_20/

The review should not exceed three pages in length.

II Structure of the Review

1. How would you assess the **quality of the project**, especially with regard to originality and the anticipated contribution to knowledge?
2. Is the topic particularly relevant and topical, and does it focus on basic, disease-oriented or patient-oriented clinical research? Is funding as a group likely to produce a significant benefit compared to the funding of individual projects? Does the research question require a funding horizon of at least six years?
3. To what extent do the **objectives and work programme** of the unit as a whole as well as those of the individual projects convincingly reflect clear working hypotheses and an appropriately distinct topic? Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the planned investigations, the suitability of the methods and the appropriateness of the schedule.
4. How would you evaluate the soundness of the preliminary work, the quality of publications (please refer to the Guidelines for Publication Lists – DFG form 1.91) and the **qualifications of the applicants** – in general and in relation to the project as a whole and the specific individual projects?

5. Please also comment on the extent to which both the spokesperson and, if known, the research coordinator meet the requirements in terms of their scientific track record, experience in leading projects, including third-party-funded projects, and integration and leadership skills.
6. How would you assess the **work and research environment**?
7. Will the Clinical Research Unit strengthen the scientific profile of the university or medical department? Will research-oriented structures be established in the participating hospitals and clinics? Will the unit contribute to intensifying cooperation between clinicians and basic researchers, and what form will the cooperation take? How will the performance-based allocation of funds for clinical research and teaching be handled within the medical department?
8. How would you evaluate the measures to support early career researchers? Are there doctoral programmes for medical graduates within the department? Are there clinical scientist programmes or opportunities for clinicians engaged in research to be released from patient care duties (temporary substitute positions)?
9. Are diversity and equal opportunity in the research system taken into account? What measures are envisaged to integrate women researchers and/or to provide funding opportunities for participating female researchers? What family-friendly provisions are available?
10. Please provide a **clear recommendation** as to whether the applicants should be invited to submit a full proposal. If so, comment on whether the requested funds are justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project, making recommendations for adjustments to the budget as necessary.