

Guidelines

for Draft Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups

The proposal procedure for Research Training Groups (RTG) and International Research Training Groups (IRTG) consists of two stages. In the first stage, the participating researchers write a draft proposal which is then submitted by the university to the DFG for review. The review criteria can be found in the "Guidelines for Reviewing Draft Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups or International Research Training Groups" (DFG form 1.304e). Based on the review, the DFG Head Office advises applicants on whether they should move to the second stage and submit a full proposal.

The draft proposal, which can be submitted in German or English, must be prepared using DIN A4 paper, Arial 11pt or a similar font, and be single-spaced. The draft proposal may not exceed 15 pages for Research Training Groups and 20 pages for International Research Training Groups, not including the cover page, table of contents, and appendix. Draft proposals exceeding the allowable length will not be considered. The appendix may only include the information specified under section E.

Ten printed copies of the draft proposal must be submitted to the DFG Head Office. One of the copies should bear original signatures by the designated spokesperson and the head of the university, and be hole-punched but not stapled; the other copies should be hole-punched and stapled once. Please include a CD-ROM with an electronic version of the proposal in PDF format without password protection or other restrictions (as a single file). The document security settings should allow your documents to be read, copied and printed.

Further information on Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups can be found in the programme guidelines (DFG forms 1.30 and 1.301e).

Proposing an International Research Training Group requires intensive preparation and close coordination among all participants. If you are planning to establish an IRTG, please consult the DFG Head Office early on. In addition to programme funding, the DFG can also provide funding for preparatory trips and workshops required to establish an International Research Training Group (cf. DFG form 1.306e). If you have any questions, please contact the responsible DFG programme staff member for more information.

Draft proposals should include the following information:

A. General Information

- University/universities submitting the proposal
- Designated spokesperson
- A list of the participating researchers and their institute affiliation. In general, a Research Training Group involves small teams of about 5 to 10 professors. The DFG strongly recommends including advanced early-career researchers and giving them responsible positions within the RTG. The applying university in Germany is expected to grant such researchers the right to pursue a doctorate.
- The draft proposal is written jointly by the participating researchers. The designated spokesperson is responsible for the proposal. The spokesperson must be able to represent the Research Training Group directly in all committees of the department as well as the university at large. The spokesperson must therefore have all the rights and obligations of a tenured full-time professor and possess the right to vote and stand for election in the senate of the university.
- If applicable: Include information on associated researchers from the same university/universities or non-university research institutions who will be collaborating closely with the Research Training Group and contribute to it significantly and on an ongoing basis.
- Number of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to be funded through RTG funds, including the funding type (fellowship or position) and extent (fellowship amount or percentage of working hours/salary level).

- Information on the various funding modalities can be found in DFG guidelines for Research Training Groups (forms 1.30, 1.301e and 2.22 plus annex). Please note that some of this information is only available in German.
- Anticipated number of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers participating with funding from other sources.
- For International Research Training Groups: Anticipated number of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers participating at the partner institution.
- The key goals, especially of the research and qualification programmes, outlined in a clear and concise summary not exceeding 30 lines (2,000 to 2,500 characters incl. spaces).

B. Research Programme

- Description of the core research idea or main topic.
- A draft of the research programme. Please note that research programmes are expected to yield excellent topics for theses (potential topics for theses or projects should be exemplified, but not described in detail).
- Innovativeness of the research programme with respect to the current state of relevant international research and feasibility/plausibility of the innovative approaches.
- For International Research Training Groups: Statement on the anticipated added value.

C. Qualification Programme and Supervision Strategy

- A draft of the qualification programme based on the research programme.
- A short description of the supervision strategy.

D. Environment of the Research Training Group

- A description of the scientific environment and a statement on why it is suitable for this Research Training Group's topic.
- A statement by the university on how the Research Training Group fits into the university's environment and what structural innovations are anticipated. Also note the guidelines on positioning RTGs relative to other doctoral programmes (see DFG form 1.309, available in German only).

- Under the Collaborative Research Centre programme, a “module for structured doctoral training” may be applied for. In the future, Collaborative Research Centres and Research Training Groups that are based at the same location and have largely overlapping topics will no longer receive parallel funding (previously approved funds are exempt from this policy). The goal is to increase efficiency by bundling funding for closely related research projects. A thematic overlap is acceptable if the Research Training Group’s topic and/or structure is sufficiently unique. For instance, the establishment of an International Research Training Group may be considered to deliver added value. If your Research Training Group relates closely to a Collaborative Research Centre, please explain what constitutes its added value.
- If the draft proposal is linked to an existing or expired Research Training Group, please explain what experiences have been applied to the new proposal, what new research objectives have been included, and what changes have been made to the researcher team.

E. Obligation

By submitting the proposal, the applying university and the participating researchers agree to adhere to the rules of good scientific practice.

F. Appendix I: Publications and References for the Research Programme

1. List of published preliminary research relevant to the research programme:

Please list publications by the participating researchers whose topics are directly related to the research programme. Alphabetise them by the researchers’ last names and indicate whether they are

- a) articles which at the time of proposal submission have been published or officially accepted by publication outlets with scientific quality assurance, and book publications;
- b) other publications;
- c) patents, either pending or issued.

Please note that the total number of items that may be listed under a) and b) combined is limited to nine for each participating researcher. When listing papers that have been officially accepted for publication but not yet published, the manuscript and the publisher's dated acknowledgement of acceptance must be submitted on CD. Manuscripts in progress and papers that have not been officially accepted for publication may not be included.

2. Additional references on the state of the art (optional):

The presentation of the research programme should be able to stand on its own and be understandable, coherent and assessable without the need to read additional documents. For a more comprehensive presentation of the current state of the art, additional papers (by the participating researchers and/or others) may be cited here. To the extent that these documents are non-published works by the participating researchers, they must be submitted on CD together with the proposal. Please note, however, that the proposal text alone will serve as the basis for the review.

G. Appendix II: Research Profiles of the Participating Researchers

Please include the research profiles of all researchers involved (including participating foreign partners in International Research Training Groups). For appropriate assessment of their scientific achievements, we recommend that **CVs** (including dates of birth, periods of academic training, periods of previous scientific work, etc.) note circumstances which could have led to interruptions of their scientific work. Examples include long-term illnesses, disabilities or periods of paternity/maternity leave. The 5-year periods given below are extended by 2 years per child.

The **publication lists** should contain information on the five most relevant original scientific papers published by each participating researcher. Publications lists must follow the following format:

Please indicate whether the publications are

- a) articles which at the time of proposal submission have been published or officially accepted by publication outlets with scientific quality assurance, and book publications;
- b) other publications;
- c) patents, either pending or issued.

When listing papers that have been officially accepted for publication but not yet published, the manuscript and the publisher's dated acknowledgement of acceptance must be submitted on CD. Manuscripts in progress and papers that have not been officially accepted for publication may not be included. Please note that the maximum total of five items per person that may be listed under a) and b) combined is to be adhered to.

Furthermore, the appendix must document any training of early-career researchers conducted by the participants within the last five years, e.g. by listing theses that were supervised (including, where possible, information regarding the further career development of doctoral graduates as well as time to degree). In addition, participants in Germany and abroad (if applicable) should list key projects they have been involved in within the last five years that have received third-party funding. Projects relevant to the Research Training Group should be indicated accordingly.