

# Guidelines

## for Reviewing Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups or International Research Training Groups

### I General

Proposals to establish Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups are evaluated by a review panel during a generally one-day, on-site visit to the host university, on the basis of the proposal. Information on proposal preparation and the review process can be found in the “Proposal Preparation Instructions for Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups” (DFG form 54.05).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_05](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_05)

In the review, we ask that you evaluate the proposal for the first funding phase on the basis of the criteria for research and training specified below.

Your comments and assessments will be recorded in writing and form the basis of the decision of the Grants Committee on Research Training Groups. We ask that you also rate the criteria for research using “excellent”, “very good”, “good”, “satisfactory”, or “unsatisfactory or not assessable”, and the criteria for training using “exemplary”, “very convincing”, “convincing”, “satisfactory”, or “inadequate or not assessable”. These ratings are intended to support the Grants Committee in its task of assessing and comparing proposals and review outcomes from a wide range of subject areas. In addition, we ask that you comment on the requested funding amounts. The main criteria are whether the requested amounts have been conclusively justified and whether they will permit optimum research that is geared towards the objectives of the Research Training Group.

For International Research Training Groups, in which the partner institution is expected to contribute equally to the group, you should also assess whether the foreign partner institution participates to an adequate extent.

After the Grants Committee has decided on the proposal, the meeting minutes along with the funding decision will be submitted to the spokesperson of the proposed Research Training Group.

## II Review Criteria

The review follows the criteria below, which arise from the objectives of the programme as specified in the “Guidelines on Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups” (DFG form 50.07).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/50\\_07](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/50_07)

Please note that the overall objectives of a Research Training Group

- **promoting high-quality research and early independence of doctoral researchers,**
- **international orientation and integration of the Research Training Group and its doctoral researchers, and**
- **promoting gender equality and work-life balance**

each concern several aspects of a Research Training Group; therefore we ask that you always take them into consideration when evaluating the different criteria.

In International Research Training Groups, the respective partner institution must also be reviewed. If any comments were given in the review of the draft proposal, please take into consideration whether these have been implemented and if so, how.

## **1 Research Criteria**

### 1.1 Participating researchers and institutions

- Academic qualification and supervisory experience of the participating researchers
- Group composition and internal collaboration
- Quality and suitability of the host institutions and existing equipment

### 1.2 Research programme

- Quality and originality of the research programme
- Disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary value added
- Appropriateness and coherence with respect to the objectives of a Research Training Group
- Integration into the research profile of the location

## **2 Training Criteria**

### 2.1 Supervision and training strategy

- Recruiting and supervision strategy
- Training and interaction within the Research Training Group
- Organisation

### 2.2 University integration and collaboration

- Integration into general doctoral training programmes, if available
- Integration into the university's academic structure and early-career support
- Value added by collaboration with other institutions (in terms of doctoral training)

### **III Additional Aspects of the Review**

#### **1 Confidentiality**

All proposals submitted to the DFG, the correspondence with reviewers, the reviews and the identity of the reviewers and participating review board members must be treated confidentially.

The scientific content of a proposal you review may not be exploited for your own and/or others' scientific purposes.

#### **2 Obligation to Follow Rules of Good Scientific Practice<sup>1</sup>**

The rules of good scientific practice also apply to reviewers. A violation of these rules can result in a charge of scientific misconduct. In particular, any infringement against the principle of confidentiality as per III.1. is considered scientific misconduct.

#### **3 Conflicts of Interest**

The DFG Head Office is not able to investigate all circumstances that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest. The DFG therefore relies on your assistance to determine whether your participation in the review meeting would be appropriate and to enable us to contact another reviewer early on if necessary.

Should circumstances exist that may be interpreted as a conflict of interest, please inform the responsible DFG staff before participating in a review meeting. If you participate in a DFG meeting without first having contacted the DFG regarding a possible conflict of interest, the DFG Head Office will assume that, to the best of your knowledge, no apparent conflict of interest exists. If you realise during or after a meeting that there may be or may have been an apparent conflict of interest, you should also contact the DFG Head Office immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> The rules of good scientific practice are presented in detail in the [white paper entitled "Proposals for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice"](#) and in the usage guidelines for Research Training Groups ([DFG form 2.22](#)).

The DFG guidelines on avoiding conflicts of interest (DFG form 10.201) can be found on the DFG website.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/10\\_201](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/10_201)

#### **4 Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Research**

In all of its funding programmes, the DFG actively promotes equal opportunities and diversity in German science and academia. Proposal reviews should not disadvantage applicants due to academically irrelevant criteria, such as age, gender or disability. Consider the applicant's scientific career development rather than his/her age. You may compensate in your evaluation for certain extra-scientific disadvantages. Unavoidable delays in an applicant's scientific career (for example longer training periods, publication gaps or less time spent abroad as a result of childcare responsibilities) should be given adequate consideration.

Further information on diversity and equal opportunities in research can be found at:

[www.dfg.de/diversity/en](http://www.dfg.de/diversity/en)