

Proposal Preparation Instructions

Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups



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I General Information

These instructions describe the mandatory format of a proposal to establish a Research Training Group and the information it must contain. Please note that the objectives of the Research Training Groups Programme as described in the “Guidelines for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups” (DFG form 50.07) form the basis of the information requested in these instructions and should therefore be considered when preparing a proposal.

www.dfg.de/formulare/50_07

The proposal must be submitted to the DFG Head Office in 12 printed copies. One of the copies should bear the original signatures of the designated spokesperson and of the head of the university, and be hole-punched but not stapled; the other copies should be hole-punched and stapled once. Please include with each of the 12 printed copies a CD-ROM (or other suitable data carrier) containing an electronic version of the proposal as a single PDF file without password protection or other reading, printing or copying restrictions.

For **International Research Training Groups (IRTGs)**, the proposal must be written jointly by both partner institutions and bear the signatures of the designated spokespersons at both partner institutions as well as that of the head of the German university.

One copy of the proposal must be sent to the responsible state ministry for comment.

Please make your proposal informative and present the information in a clear and well-organised fashion. This will help DFG reviewers make a fair and objective decision. Please be sure to meet the following obligatory requirements:

- The proposal – without cover page, table of contents and appendix – may not exceed 55 pages in length, or 65 pages for **IRTGs** (DIN A4, Arial 11pt or similar font, single-spaced and printed on both sides of the paper).

- The appendix must include a list of publications and a bibliography with regard to the research programme as well as biographical sketches for all participating researchers (for IRTGs also those at the foreign partner institution) (see instructions in the appendix). It must also include declarations as per sections 9 and 10, and a sample supervision agreement where applicable. The appendix may not include any other information.

Proposals that exceed the allowable length will not be considered.

- The proposal must address all items specified in the instructions and include all section numbers and titles as stated. Please avoid repetition and refer instead to the relevant proposal section.
- The proposal must be prefaced by a table of contents including page numbers. Tables and charts should be included wherever appropriate.
- The proposal may be written in German or English. Please note that proposals for an IRTG should generally be written in English. Other languages should be used only after consulting with the DFG Head Office first.
- The review criteria can be found in the “Guidelines for Reviewing Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups or International Research Training Groups” (DFG form 1.305). Please note that the list is not exhaustive. It does, however, provide an orientation regarding the most important aspects.

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_305

If you will be applying for an International Research Training Group, please particularly note the “Guidelines for Differentiating International Research Training Groups from Research Training Groups” (DFG form 1.312).

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_312

Publication of Data on Applicants and the Research Training Group

The data necessary for processing your proposal will be stored and processed electronically by the DFG.

By submitting a proposal you agree that, if the proposal is approved, your work address and contact details (name, institution and location, phone, fax, e-mail and website) as well as information about the content of the project (e.g. topic, summary, keywords, subject area, DFG programme, funding period, international connections) will be published in the GEPRIS information system

gepris.dfg.de/en

and may be published in other, non-commercial publications and databases created in cooperation with the DFG.

You may withdraw your consent to full/partial publication at any time, without affecting the lawfulness of any processing carried out prior to your withdrawal. If you would like to withdraw your consent, please notify the responsible DFG programme contact, preferably in electronic form.

II Proposal Preparation Instructions

<Title>

<Applicant university/universities>

<Spokesperson>

Additionally for **IRTGs**:

<Partner institution>

<Department(s)>

<Spokesperson>

Proposed funding period: <day month year> to <day month year>

< Today's date >

1 General Information

1.1 Title in German and English

Please state the title of your (International) Research Training Group in German and English.

1.2 Host university/universities and other participating institution(s) in Germany, and (where appropriate) participating foreign university/universities and institution(s)

State the name of the German host university and for **IRTGs** also that of the participating foreign university. If several German universities are submitting the proposal, it must be signed by the administrations of each one. Please indicate the lead university, i.e. the institution that will administer the funds in the event of a grant. If other institutions (universities, non-university research institutions, museums, businesses, etc.) are significantly involved in the proposal by contributing substantially to the research and/or qualification programme, they may be listed here as well.

1.3 Participating researchers

Please name the designated spokesperson, or for **IRTGs** the designated spokespersons on both sides, and all participating researchers, giving their full names and exact work addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, websites (if applicable), and relevant research areas. In general, the group of applicants consists of 5 to 10 professors, or for **IRTGs** 5 to 10 professors in each country. If the proposal exceeds this number, an explanation should be included. The DFG strongly recommends including advanced early career researchers and giving them responsible positions within the Research Training Group. The applicant university is expected to grant such researchers the right to supervise and examine doctoral researchers.

Please use the following table as a template.

Last name, first name, academic title	Chair/depart- ment, work address	Telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, web- site	Research area

The appendix must include biographical sketches for all participating researchers (for **IRTGs** also those at the foreign partner institution) (see instructions in appendix II).

Researchers in charge of a Research Training Group are expected to work at the same location, or for IRTGs at one location in each country.

If participants are based at more than one location (per country), a justification should be included. Please explain how the geographic distance between locations is taken into account in the design of the joint research and qualification programme, or refer to the relevant sections in the proposal.

1.4 Summary in German and English

The key goals of the Research Training Group, especially of the research and qualification programmes, should be outlined in a clear and concise summary. The German and English summaries are not to exceed 30 lines (2,000 to 2,500 characters including spaces) each. This summary will be used to inform the DFG's decision-making bodies, which are composed of representatives from all disciplines, and the general public (e.g. through the DFG's annual report).

1.5 Funding period and start date

The proposal to establish a Research Training Group pertains to a funding period of 4.5 years. Please state the anticipated start date. Funding can usually begin four to six months after the grant has been approved. Once the award letter has been received, the start date cannot be changed.

1.6 Proposed number of positions or fellowships for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, qualifying fellows, and student assistants

A Research Training Group includes up to 30 doctoral researchers, 10 to 15 of whom are generally funded through the Research Training Group. An **IRTG** includes up to 20 doctoral researchers per partner institution, 10 to 15 of whom on the German side are generally funded through the Research Training Group. Doctoral researchers in the Research Training Group are expected to work at the participating institutions.

Funding for positions or fellowships can be requested for up to 54 months. The individual funding duration for a doctoral researcher is generally 36 months. Thus, up to three “generations” (cohorts) of doctoral researchers can be funded consecutively during the RTG’s maximum 9-year duration (two funding periods of 4.5 years each). It is also possible to apply for funding to award positions/fellowships at various intervals during the course of the RTG.

The funding duration of an individual doctoral researcher may also exceed 36 months in justified cases; up to 48 months can be funded. This extended period, awarded on an individual basis, is decided on by the Research Training Group. Use of this option to extend the funding duration is subject to a transparent, RTG-internal, standardised decision process; this decision process will also be considered during the review of the Research Training Group. A description of the proposed plans should be included under section 5.2, “Supervision and Career Advancement.”

On the German side, the quality standards that apply to externally funded doctoral researchers are the same as for those funded through the Research Training Group. Except for the salary or fellowship amount, all doctoral researchers on the German side must be treated equally; they are subject to the same selection procedures and must be integrated into the Research Training Group, both formally and scientifically.

Funding for postdoctoral researchers can be requested for positions or fellowships by submitting a plan that describes how they will be integrated into the RTG's research and qualification programme and how their professional development will be supported in the RTG. On the basis of this plan, a shorter or longer duration of postdoc participation may be proposed. The specifics of the plan, which is subject to review, should be presented under 3 "Research Programme" and 5.2 "Supervision and Career Advancement". As a rule, no more than two postdoctoral researchers can be funded simultaneously in an RTG.

Please specify:

- the number of positions and/or fellowships for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, qualifying fellows and student assistants to be funded under the DFG's Research Training Groups Programme;
- the expected number of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers participating on the German side with funding from other sources;
- for **IRTGs** also the anticipated number of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers participating at the partner institution.

2 Profile of the Research Training Group

In about two pages, describe how the proposed (International) Research Training Group will achieve the programme objectives – excellence, innovation, internationality – and how it will meet the requirements of the funding programme ("Guidelines for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups", DFG form 50.07).

www.dfg.de/formulare/50_07

Explain in particular what makes this Research Training Group scientifically or academically unique, how the research programme promotes innovation, and what constitutes the added value of the qualification programme.

Furthermore, in view of the programme's core research idea, describe the scientific criteria according to which the group of participating researchers has been formed, and why these researchers are especially qualified to run this Research Training Group. For **IRTGs**, describe in particular the cooperative arrangements between the researchers on both sides that provide the basis for the International Research Training Group, how the participants complement each other's expertise, and what constitutes the added value of the cooperation.

If you were informed of any requirements, instructions or recommendations from the review of the draft proposal, please comment on these. Describe whether they have been implemented in the proposal and if so, how. If you did not receive any specific reviewer comments, this point may be omitted.

3 Research Programme

The general requirements for the research programme of an (International) Research Training Group are laid out in the "Guidelines for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups" (DFG form 50.07).

www.dfg.de/formulare/50_07

Please describe the participating researchers' shared research goals by addressing the following aspects:

- the core research idea and the Research Training Group's resulting main focus;
- individual core research areas or individual projects and their integrative interconnection, both with each other and with the research concept at large (preferably accompanied by a schematic presentation);
- the current state of relevant national and international research;
- participants' preliminary work directly relating to the research programme (reference may be made to the list of publications and the biographical sketches in the proposal appendix);

- potential topics for theses or a description of planned projects (where possible; where this is not possible, please provide examples).
- If the inclusion of postdoctoral researchers is planned, please explain their integration into the research programme and their scientific contributions to the RTG (including description of possible research projects). It should be clear why these tasks and these projects should be handled by early career researchers who have already earned their doctoral degree.
- If the inclusion of qualifying fellows and/or student assistants is planned, explain their tasks and role within the research programme.
- If, in addition to the participating researchers, other researchers from the same or other universities or non-university research institutions will be involved in implementing the research programme to make a significant contribution towards it, please describe this here. Explain their importance and expertise in relation to the research programme and how they will contribute to the Research Training Group.
- For **IRTGs**, describe in particular the research objectives of the joint programme, the expected added value resulting from the collaboration, as well as the specifics of the cooperation between the partners on the core research areas or projects.

Please be sure to present all areas and projects in a consistent manner.

If you plan to conduct experiments involving humans, including research on identifiable human material and data, animals or genetic engineering, dual use research of concern, or any research covered under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), please describe the ethical and legal implications of the planned experiments and note the requirements and obligations set forth in section 10.

In addition, note that for any experiments involving humans, including research on identifiable human material and data, you must comply with the Declaration of Helsinki as last revised and submit corresponding statements by the responsible ethics committee at the latest prior to commencement of research.

If you are conducting animal experiments, please explain how the principle of the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) will be implemented. For the analysis and reporting of results, the DFG expects you to comply with established international standards, such as the ARRIVE guidelines (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/arrive-guidelines>).

Please examine whether your research programme or any parts thereof involves an immediate risk of yielding knowledge, products or technology that could intentionally be misused (also by third parties) to cause substantial harm. If such a risk exists, please describe the benefits of pursuing this work weighed against the risks of potential misuse and what measures are planned to minimise these risks. Refer to the guidelines contained in the publication “Scientific Freedom and Scientific Responsibility – Recommendations on Handling Security-Relevant Research”, published by the DFG and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, 28 May 2014. If your university or research institution has a research ethics committee, consult with them prior to commencing your research work and request a statement from them.

If Research Training Group funds will be employed to systematically generate research data or information that can be reused within the group or by other researchers, please explain whether and how such data will be stored for the long term and made available to others. Please take into consideration any existing standards in your field and any available data repositories.¹

A list of published preparatory research must be included as an appendix. You may also list additional references on the state of the art (cf. instructions in appendix I).

4 Qualification Programme

The general requirements for the qualification programme of an (International) Research Training Group are laid out in the “Guidelines for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups” (DFG form 50.07).

www.dfg.de/formulare/50_07

The qualification strategy includes a qualification programme specific to the Research Training Group, a programme for visiting researchers, and any other measures that contribute, directly or indirectly, to the qualification of doctoral researchers, such as internships. For **IRTGs**, it also includes mutual research visits at the respective partner institution.

Please describe potential professional avenues, within and outside of academia, for researchers who have completed their doctorates within the Research Training Group, including any prospects for development in these areas over the coming years.

In the following sub-sections, you are asked to explain in detail how the qualification programme will prepare doctoral researchers to compete successfully in these occupational fields.

¹ Improving the handling of research data is a priority for national and international research organisations and for science in general. The DFG therefore seeks to support with its funding the safeguarding, preservation and long-term availability of research data.

4.1 Qualification programme

The qualification programme forms the core of the qualification strategy. It must be tailored to the research programme and support the overall objective of scientifically qualifying doctoral researchers, ensuring their interaction within and between all participating institutions. It should be designed so as not to prolong the time to degree.

The description of the programme must include at least the following information:

- a table listing all courses specific to the Research Training Group, including type, duration, frequency, contents, target group, location, prospective instructor, and whether participation is compulsory for Research Training Group members; for **IRTGs**, list all courses to be held either locally or jointly;
- complementary courses from the universities' general programmes or other (external) programmes, if applicable;
- key skills training courses;
- training courses on research involving animal experiments, where such experiments are part of the research programme (see also section 10);
- training courses on the collection, storage, editing and sustainable provision of research data;
- training in the rules of good scientific practice (see DFG form 2.22, available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22

For help in designing such training, please consult the curriculum for courses on good scientific practice (in German), provided by the ombudsman for research and available at:

www.ombudsman-fuer-die-wissenschaft.de/curriculum.html

- Describe how the transition from the current generation of doctoral researchers to the next and the continuous integration of doctoral researchers throughout the funding period will be handled.
- If the Research Training Group will include highly qualified graduates of universities of applied sciences or holders of bachelor's degrees as qualifying fellows, a special strategy for their qualification and integration into the Research Training Group must be presented. In addition, a statement by the university must be included confirming that doctoral admission will be granted upon successful completion of the Research Training Group's qualification phase of up to 12 months (see also section 9.4).
- If applicable, please describe how student assistants will be integrated into the qualification programme.
- If, in addition to the participating researchers, other researchers from the same or other universities or non-university research institutions will be involved in implementing the qualification programme to make a significant contribution towards it, please describe this here. Explain their importance and expertise in relation to the qualification programme and how they will contribute to the Research Training Group.

4.2 Visiting researchers and Mercator fellows

Please explain how visiting researchers – from domestic or international universities or non-university institutions – who are not part of the Research Training Group will be integrated into the research and qualification programmes, e.g. by way of multi-day contributions to block seminars, one-day lecture visits, etc., or refer to the relevant sections of the proposal. Name the visiting researchers who will be invited. If this is not yet possible at the time of the proposal, please name examples.

If you are planning intensive and long-term exchanges with outside researchers, especially from abroad, Mercator fellows may be included (see section 7.5).

4.3 Additional qualification measures

Please describe additional measures planned to further the scientific and professional qualification of doctoral researchers, such as research visits abroad and internships at cultural institutions or businesses.

4.4 For IRTGs: Research visits to the partner institution

Longer-term, coordinated and reciprocal research visits (one or more with an overall duration of 6 to 12 months) by doctoral researchers to the respective partner institution are a key element of International Research Training Groups. Please describe in particular how these visits abroad will be coordinated (e.g. with regard to appropriate integration into doctoral training stages and into the overall research programme or ensuring local supervision). The successful implementation of research visits is an important criterion in the review of renewal proposals for International Research Training Groups.

5 Supervision and Career Advancement, Gender Equality, Organisation and Quality Management

The personnel and organisational strategies should specify the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the (International) Research Training Group and describe their cooperation in selecting doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, supervising doctoral researchers, and managing the Research Training Group in general.

Comprehensive quality management is required to guarantee the desired high standard of quality in research and qualification for the duration of the Research Training Group. Measures supporting this goal need to be built into various components of the personnel and organisational strategies (e.g. definition of responsibilities, quality-based selection process, and measures to promote gender equality at all qualification levels).

5.1 Announcement and selection procedure

The (International) Research Training Group is responsible for filling positions and/or awarding fellowships; these should generally be announced internationally. The selection procedure should be both performance-based and transparent.

Selection criteria for doctoral researchers include the timely completion of higher education, with a qualifying degree and above-average results, as well as proven qualifications with particular relevance to the Research Training Group. Candidates should have shown motivation and an interest in research in their careers to date, and should preferably be able to demonstrate initial experience in scientific work. The doctoral training should also fit coherently into the candidate's previous professional history and future career planning.

The selection criteria for postdoctoral researchers include successful completion of a doctorate and proven specialised and methodological knowledge which particularly qualifies them to participate in the Research Training Group. It is preferable to foster individuals who come to the RTG from the outside in order to provide new impetus and expand available expertise.

- Please describe the profile of the target groups of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to be recruited for the Research Training Group, as well as the announcement and selection procedure planned to attract these groups.
- Explain the specific procedures and criteria to be used in selecting doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.

5.2 Supervision and career advancement

A binding supervision model is the basis for systematic, transparent and successful doctoral training and timely completion of a degree. When detailing your plans, please consider at least the following aspects:

- Supervision should be provided by at least two professors or by an advisory committee. How will advisors for individual doctoral researchers be chosen? Are there plans for joint supervision or for advisory committees? How will the supervision be organised? For **IRTGs**: Are the foreign partners involved in the supervision? Is adequate supervision ensured during visits to the partner institution abroad?
- Regular progress checks should be planned from the beginning. How, when, and by whom will they be conducted? Will performance reports be issued?
- What considerations have been made – in consultation with the university administration where applicable – with regard to cases in which doctorates are not completed within the regular 36-month funding period?
- It is expected that supervision agreements be concluded. Do sample agreements currently exist, and can they be attached?
- In addition to providing direct thesis supervision, Research Training Groups also aim to promote the scientific independence of their doctoral researchers. How will this independence be supported? How will doctoral researchers be integrated into the national and international research network? How will the international visibility of the research findings be ensured?

Doctoral supervision should also take into account early career planning. This includes both career paths within and outside academia. The time schedule of the doctoral project should also be considered. When planning doctoral projects, please note the 36-month standard funding duration.

In exceptional, well-justified cases, individual doctoral researchers may also be funded for longer than 36 months. Reasons for extending funding beyond the 36-month period must be related to the progress or development of the research work. Delays in doctoral reviews or examination procedures do not justify extensions. Funding for up to 48 months may be awarded by the Research Training Group. The decision of whether to extend an individual funding duration beyond the 36-month period is made by the Research Training Group and must be documented accordingly. RTGs must finance the extension from their own budgets; additional funds cannot be awarded.

If you would like to make use of this flexible option during the course of your Research Training Group, please describe what quality assurance processes have been established in your organisational structure for such decisions.

Promising early career researchers should be encouraged to remain within the research system. Researchers who have completed their doctorates within the Research Training Group should therefore be enabled to define and pursue their own research topics, which they can then use as the basis for their own independent project proposals. Up to €100,000 in start-up funding may be requested per 4.5-year funding period (cf. section 7.8).

If you would like to apply for start-up funding, please provide a description of how these funds will be used, addressing in particular the following points:

- the criteria used to select the recipients of this funding;
- the type of Research Training Group support the selected candidates will receive for their research activities to promote their scientific independence, e.g. in terms of future proposals;
- a description of the university environment conducive to career advancement during this transition phase (including resources).

If postdoctoral researchers will be involved in the RTG and funding is requested for this purpose, please explain which RTG-specific training opportunities will be provided for them. Describe these individuals' role within the RTG (including job description, specific responsibilities, rights and obligations of both sides). Discuss additional planned career measures, where possible integrated into the university's programmes for early career support and staff development. Concerning the scientific contribution of postdoctoral researchers to the RTG, reference can be made to 3 "Research Programme". The use of these postdoctoral researchers for coordination tasks to a significant extent is not desirable. For more on this topic, see 7.3 "Module Coordination".

Depending on the subject- and RTG-specific career development strategy, a shorter or longer participation period may be appropriate and necessary for individual postdoctoral researchers. Present your plan in this regard. The specific individual funding period is determined by the RTG on the basis of the plan and of the concrete project and career development. Explain what quality-assured decision-making processes will be established in the RTG's organisational structure in order to make these decisions in each individual case.

5.3 Gender equality in research

Gender equality and work-life balance policies are important factors in providing successful early career support for researchers.

Please outline the measures already adopted by the applicant university and any other participating institutions to sustainably increase the share of female researchers and improve work-family balance.

Within the context of these standards, DFG member institutions annually provide quantitative data on gender equality at a standardised institutional and departmental level. Therefore, this information does not need to be included in the proposal (also refer to the DFG's Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality).

www.dfg.de/gender_equality_standards

Please provide RTG-specific information on how many male and female researchers are participating or will participate at what qualification level using the following table as a template. Please take into account both DFG-funded and associated members in table A.

<u>A. Research Training Group Members</u>		
	% Goal	
	M	F
Doctoral Researchers		
Postdoctoral Researchers		

<u>B. Participating Researchers</u>				
	Number Status Quo		% Status Quo	
	<i>According to establishment proposal</i>			
	M	F	M	F
Postdoctoral Researchers*				
Junior Professors, Independent Junior Research Group Leaders				
Professors C3/W2				
Professors C4/W3				
Total				

* Research staff with a doctoral degree but without their own working group

In addition, please describe any specific measures to promote both gender equality and work-life balance in the Research Training Group. Please explain how these fit with and complement the measures already in place at the university. We recommend coordinating with your university's equal opportunities officer on this issue.

Special funds may be requested to finance these measures to promote gender equality within the Research Training Group (cf. section 7.9). Regarding the specific usage guidelines for such funds, note the instructions in DFG form 1.42 (available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_42

5.4 Organisation

The Research Training Group manages its own internal organisation. The participating researchers elect a spokesperson among themselves. The spokesperson – in the case of **IRTGs**, jointly with the spokesperson in the partner country – manages the Research Training Group and represents it externally. Please describe further organisational aspects, including:

- the specific modalities of management, and for **IRTGs** especially the cooperation between the partners;
- who will organise the qualification and visiting researcher programmes;
- what opportunities doctoral researchers will be given to help shape the Research Training Group; and
- for **IRTGs** the rules according to which the doctoral degree will be granted, which institution will award it, and whether a joint doctoral degree is envisaged in addition to joint doctoral training.

5.5 Additional quality management aspects

Please describe additional components of the planned quality management strategy, with particular regard to the following questions:

- How will the development of the research programme be directed (e.g. quality-based project selection)?
- What measures are planned to optimise the qualification programme throughout the duration of the Research Training Group?

- How will relevant data (e.g. application and selection procedure statistics) be documented throughout the duration of the Research Training Group and used to initiate improvements if needed? These data will also be required for the progress report to be submitted with the renewal proposal and for the final report.
- What criteria will be used to evaluate the success of the Research Training Group (e.g. scientific success within an international context and the career development of researchers who have completed their degrees within the Research Training Group) and what are your standards of comparison? The Research Training Group's own criteria for success will also be considered in the review of the renewal proposal and the final report.

6 Environment of the Research Training Group

6.1 Environment

The general requirements for the research environment of an (International) Research Training Group are laid out in the "Guidelines for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups" (DFG form 50.07).

www.dfg.de/formulare/50_07

Research Training Groups are established for a specific time period by the applicant university/universities. On the one hand, they should support the university's research priorities and foster international networking. On the other hand, the university is expected not only to provide core support, including an appropriately equipped research environment, but also to assist the Research Training Group in various other ways.

The description of the scientific and academic environment should address issues such as:

- How does the Research Training Group fit into the university's research environment and medium-term priorities? How is the Research Training Group scientifically unique compared to other local research projects with related topics?

Within this context, please describe the university's research environment and infrastructure, e.g. cooperative arrangements with other coordinated projects such as Col-

laborative Research Centres and Research Units, Clusters of Excellence and Graduate Schools funded under the Excellence Initiative, and projects funded by federal, state, and EU programmes.

Also note the guidelines on positioning Research Training Groups relative to other doctoral programmes (see DFG form 1.309, available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_309

- To what extent does the Research Training Group fit into existing academic structures? Is it compatible with current exam regulations or will the regulations need to be modified? Are there other programmes for promoting early career researchers, e.g. existing structured doctoral training programmes (also including those within Clusters of Excellence and Collaborative Research Centres) or graduate schools? Are specific collaborations planned? Are there plans to integrate the Research Training Group into a graduate school?
- What constitutes the added value of the Research Training Group compared to other locally established forms of doctoral training and, if applicable, current local structured doctoral training programmes, in particular graduate schools established under the Excellence Initiative? What structural effects can be expected from the Research Training Group?
- What additional support, material or financial, will the university provide directly to the Research Training Group, e.g. additional funding for direct-project or coordination costs, short-term positions to enable doctoral researchers to finish their degree after the maximum funding period has expired, childcare options?
- How will the university contribute to the Research Training Group's success? Are measures planned to support the doctoral training process (e.g. through simplification of doctoral procedures for interdisciplinary projects, cross-departmental degree regulations, family-friendly doctoral training measures, or support for foreign doctoral researchers)?

- The participating professors should be relieved of workload obligations adequately to compensate for their efforts in the Research Training Group. What incentive mechanisms are planned by the university to actively enhance the Research Training Group's appeal as a centre of research excellence?
- Which associations and cooperative arrangements with non-university research institutions will be leveraged for the Research Training Group?
- How will the Research Training Group be integrated into the international research environment?

For **IRTGs**, please also describe the local conditions at the partner institution, including:

- the research environment and infrastructure that will be available to the International Research Training Group;
- compatibility with existing doctoral programmes and the integration of the Research Training Group;
- other resources to be provided by the partner institution in support of the Research Training Group, e.g. staff, space and accommodations.

6.2 Distinction between the Research Training Group and a Collaborative Research Centre

The Research Training Group Module may be submitted under the Collaborative Research Centres Programme. The aim is to leverage for the Collaborative Research Centres Programme the experience gained and the structures established under the Research Training Groups Programme. A Research Training Group whose topic overlaps with a Collaborative Research Centre based at the same location can only be funded if the Research Training Group's topic and/or structure is sufficiently unique. If your Research Training Group relates closely to a Collaborative Research Centre, please provide a detailed description of its added value.

6.3 Distinction between the proposed and previous Research Training Groups

If the proposal to establish a Research Training Group is linked to an existing Research Training Group or one that has ended, please explain the connections between the previous

and the currently proposed Research Training Group, taking into account the following questions:

- What new research objectives has the proposed Research Training Group included in its research programme?
- What, if any, are the personnel changes in the group of researchers submitting the proposal?
- What experiences from the previous Research Training Group are reflected in the new proposal?
- What structural changes did the previous Research Training Group bring about at your university (e.g. modified doctoral degree regulations or new structured doctoral training programmes)?

7 Modules and Funding

The funding period is 4.5 years. Initially, funding is awarded for the first fiscal year and announced for the subsequent years. **Funding is tied to the fiscal year (which corresponds to a calendar year), i.e. it is not possible to carry over funds to the next fiscal year. Funds that are not used by the end of a given fiscal year are forfeited.** For rules on accounting and the use of the funds, please refer to the usage guidelines (DFG form 2.22, available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22

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

Submission of the **Research Training Group Module** is mandatory when proposing a Research Training Group (see section 7.1). In addition, one or more of the following modules (see sections 7.2 to 7.9) may be submitted along with it. For details, refer to the instructions on the individual modules, along with the following explanations.

7.1 Module Research Training Group

Use the Research Training Group Module (DFG form 52.15) to request funding for staff and direct project costs.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_15

Programme-specific instructions on 1.1 (Doctoral Researchers) and 1.2 (Doctoral Researchers in Medicine)

Doctoral researchers may be funded through staff positions or fellowships. Doctoral researchers in medicine who are to be funded before they graduate are only eligible for fellowships.

Funding for positions can be requested under the category “Doctoral Researcher or Comparable”. 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

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

Funding for fellowships can be requested under the category “Doctoral Fellowships”. The DFG awards fellowship grants according to the mandatory fellowship rates under the DFG budget. These rates and other details can be found in the supplement to the usage guidelines for Research Training Groups (DFG form 2.22a, available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22a

Funding for doctoral researchers in medicine who are to be funded before they graduate can be requested under the category “Doctoral Fellowships in Medicine”. As dissertations/theses in the field of medicine are often started during the study phase, medical students may receive a fellowship in medicine to conduct doctoral research. The students must be integrated in the Research Training Group’s research and qualification programme during the fellowship period. Please describe this in the appropriate sections of the proposal. Integration in the Research Training Group beyond this period is also encouraged. This is possible, for example, in admitting the doctoral researcher as an associated member of the Research Training Group. For further information, including the fellowship amount, please refer to DFG form 2.22a (Supplement to the Usage Guidelines for Research Training Groups, available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22a

Funding for positions or fellowships can be requested for up to 54 months. The individual funding duration for a doctoral researcher is generally 36 months. Thus, up to three “generations” (cohorts) of doctoral researchers can be funded consecutively during the RTG’s maximum 9-year duration (two funding periods of 4.5 years each). It is also possible to apply for funding to award positions/fellowships at various intervals during the course of the RTG.

Funding for doctoral researchers whose individual maximum 36-month funding duration did not end during the first funding period can continue using funds from the RTG’s renewal phase. If the Research Training Group is not approved for a second funding period, please note the regulations on completion funding in DFG form 2.22 (available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22

- Please state the number and duration of positions or fellowships to be awarded to doctoral researchers and the working hours as a percentage of full time/fellowship amounts.

- Please justify your decision for requests for positions (including the number of working hours) or fellowships (including fellowship amounts). In this context, the subject-specific funding modalities for doctoral researchers, within the academic environment of the Research Training Group as well as in national and international comparison, are relevant. For more information, see:

www.dfg.de/formulare/55_02

- Please explain briefly why the proposed number of doctoral researchers should be funded, referring to the research programme where applicable.

Programme-specific instructions on 1.3 (Postdoctoral Researchers)

Funding requests for postdoctoral researchers require a specific plan that specifies how postdocs will be integrated into the RTG's research and qualification programme and how their professional development will be supported in the RTG. Relevant explanations should be provided in 3 "Research Programme" and 5.2 "Supervision and Career Advancement". As a rule, no more than two early career researchers can be funded simultaneously in an RTG.

Postdoctoral funding can be requested for positions or fellowships for a period of up to 54 months. Depending on the subject- and RTG-specific career development strategy, a shorter or longer participation period may be appropriate and necessary for individual postdoctoral researchers.

Funding for positions can be requested under the category "Postdoctoral Researcher or Comparable". 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 fellowships can be requested under the category "Postdoctoral Fellowships". The DFG awards fellowship grants according to the mandatory fellowship rates under the DFG budget. These rates and other details can be found in the supplement to the usage guidelines for Research Training Groups (DFG form 2.22a, available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22a

- Please state the number of positions or fellowships to be funded for postdoctoral researchers and the requested funding duration.

Programme-specific instructions on 1.4 (Qualifying Fellowships)

Please state the number of fellowships to be funded and the requested funding duration.

Please refer to the parts of the proposal where the special qualification programme for qualifying fellows is described, as well as to the included statement from the university confirming that doctoral admission will be granted upon successful completion of the qualification programme (cf. 4.1 and 9.4).

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. Please refer to the programme-specific instructions provided in 2.2 to 2.6.

Programme-specific instructions on 2.2 (Travel)

- Travel by doctoral and postdoctoral researchers:
When calculating the maintenance costs for **fellowship holders'** visits abroad lasting longer than 30 days, please refer to the DFG's foreign allowances (incl. possible purchasing power compensation), which can be determined using the foreign allowance calculator on the DFG website.

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/coordinated_programmes/research_training_groups/facts_figures/foreign_allowances/index.jsp

These rates do not apply to those with staff positions, although they may serve as a basis for calculating the budget for trips abroad by those doctoral researchers as well. Otherwise, the funding of staff travel expenses falls under the relevant laws on travel expenses.

- Travel by participating researchers to organise and hold courses as part of the qualification programme can be funded as well.

Programme-specific instructions on 2.3 (Visiting Researchers)

Funding may be requested for lectures or visits by highly qualified visiting researchers who will make a significant contribution to the research and/or qualification programme. The remuneration of the visiting researchers, including the amount of the standard honorarium, must be in accordance with the regulations applicable at the host institution.

Programme-specific instructions on 2.4 (Experimental Animals)

If your project requires funding to purchase, breed and keep experimental animals, please state and justify the requested amount. Provide a cost estimate that includes the number of animals required and the duration of housing. In calculating the costs for keeping mice and rats, please note the relevant DFG guidelines in DFG form 55.03, available in German only.

www.dfg.de/formulare/55_03

Programme-specific instructions on 2.5 (Other)

Funding may be requested for user fees for major instrumentation and core research facilities. The DFG can only cover such costs that are required specifically for the project. Basic funding for the individual instruments or core facilities must be financed through the institution's core support. Further information can be found in DFG form 55.04, available in German only.

www.dfg.de/formulare/55_04

Programme-specific instructions on 2.6 (Publications)

For the 4.5-year funding period, publication funding of up to €20,000 can be requested.

7.2 Module Replacements

If your Research Training Group requires that any of the responsible professors be released from teaching or administrative duties, the Research Training Group's spokesperson or the host university can use this module to request funding for replacements to take over these responsibilities.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_03

Programme-specific instructions

In Research Training Groups, funding for replacements serves to relieve the responsible professors of workload obligations to allow them to work as principal investigators on Research Training Group projects. Professors are required to continue to meet their responsibilities within the Research Training Group during the replacement period. The funding request can be submitted with the establishment proposal or as a supplementary proposal while the Research Training Group is in progress. A maximum of four proposals for replacement costs can be granted per funding period (4.5 years).

Please describe the research project and its current status and provide details of the approach you are planning to take during the proposal period and the methods which are to be used to carry out the project. With reference to your teaching and administrative workloads, explain why releasing you from such duties is necessary to allow the project to be carried out within the framework of the Research Training Group. Also state the amount of time you will spend on working with the Research Training Group. If members of the Research Training Group have already had replacement costs approved by the DFG, please list their names and the replacement periods.

If you will be requesting replacement funding through this module in a supplementary proposal, please include with the proposal a summary of not more than 15 lines, if possible, in which you describe the key intentions of the project you are planning. This summary will be used to provide information to the interdisciplinary decision-making bodies at the DFG. The supplementary proposal for replacement funding should also include the biographical sketch of the relevant person in accordance with appendix II.

If funds are granted, a report on the progress and findings achieved by the project must be submitted with the Research Training Group's next progress report (renewal proposal or final report).

7.3 Module Coordination

Funding can be requested for coordination tasks within the Research Training Group.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_12

Programme-specific instructions

Coordination funding can only be used for personnel who are necessary for the administrative coordination of the Research Training Group but are not involved in attaining its scientific objectives. Scientific staff should not assume a significant amount of administrative tasks and may not be financed via coordination funds.

7.4 Module Temporary Substitutes for Clinicians

If physicians are to perform scientific tasks in a Research Training Group's research and qualification programme, funding may be requested for staff to take over their patient-care responsibilities. This is also a way to (re-)involve early career physicians in research.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_04

Programme-specific instructions

Please describe – if necessary also with reference to other parts of the proposal – your model for such a substitute programme in the Research Training Group, explaining both the content and the form of the programme. Funding can be requested either in conjunction with the proposal to establish a Research Training Group or as part of the renewal proposal. It is not possible to submit a supplementary proposal while the Research Training Group is in progress.

7.5 Module Mercator Fellows

This module enables the Research Training Group to request funding for intensive and long-term cooperation with researchers in Germany and especially those from abroad, beyond the scope of typical research visits. Fellows will partially be on site but will remain in contact with the Research Training Group even after their stay.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_05

Programme-specific instructions

The significance of the Mercator fellows for the Research Training Group and their role and activities in the research and qualification programmes should be explained in section 4.2 "Visiting researchers and Mercator fellows".

7.6 Module Project-Specific Workshops

Use this module to request funds for workshops, colloquia, networking meetings of Research Training Groups with similar topics, etc. to be conducted as part of the Research Training Group.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_06

Programme-specific instructions

In Research Training Groups, these events are part of the qualification programme. The concept should be explained in more detail under section 4.1 “Qualification programme”.

7.7 Module Public Relations

To enable the Research Training Group to present its work to the general lay public, you can request funding for public relations.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_07

7.8 Module Start-Up Funding

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

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_11

Programme-specific instructions

In Research Training Groups, this type of funding is intended to support researchers who have completed their doctorates within the Research Training Group, e.g. in developing their own independent project proposals. When requesting start-up funding, the intended use of funds (positions/fellowships, direct project costs, etc.) must be outlined and the underlying plan must be presented under section 5.2 “Supervision and career advancement”.

7.9 Module Gender Equality Measures in Research Networks

This module can be used to request funds for targeted measures to promote gender equality in science and academia.

www.dfg.de/formulare/52_14

Programme-specific instructions

In the proposal to either establish or renew a Research Training Group, up to €15,000 per year or €67,500 per funding period may be requested as a lump sum for this purpose. If necessary, the sum may be distributed unevenly over the funding period. Once funds have been approved, they may not be shifted to other fiscal years.

The need for funding should be outlined briefly with reference to section 5.3 by describing the planned measures, how they are tailored to suit the needs of the Research Training Group, and their relationship to the university's existing equal-opportunity measures.

Additional information can be found in the infosheet on gender equality measures in Research Training Groups (DFG form 1.42, available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_42

Tables: Summary of modules and items submitted for funding

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

You may add additional lines as necessary (for example for showing positions or fellowships that cover multiple periods or to show different generations of doctoral researchers).

Table 1:

Fellowships	Basic amount EUR / month	Number	Duration (from – to)
Module Research Training Group:			
Doctoral Fellowships			
Postdoctoral Fellowships			
Qualifying Fellowships			
Doctoral Fellowships in Medicine			

Table 2:

Staff	Hours as percentage of full time	Number	Duration (from – to)
Module Research Training Group:			
Doctoral Researcher or Comparable			
Postdoctoral Researcher or Comparable			
Module Temporary Substitutes for Clinicians			

Table 3 (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							
Visiting Researchers							
Experimental Animals							
Other							
Publications							
Module Replacements							
Module Coordination							

Module Mercator Fellows							
Module Project-Specific Workshops							
Module Public Relations							
Module Start-Up Funding							
Module Gender Equality Measures in Research Networks							
Total							

Items that cannot be funded include:

- compensation for the Research Training Group's participating researchers;
- travel by the professors who run the Research Training Group, except for trips to organise and hold courses as part of the qualification programme or to collaborate with foreign partners;
- construction, furnishings, rent;
- staff and equipment considered contemporary core support;
- general furnishings and equipment (including office materials, fax machines, computer equipment, etc.);
- use of the university's central services (e.g. computer centres, scientific or other services) on the basis of the university's internal cost allocation;
- tuition fees at the universities involved in the Research Training Group;
- operating costs and maintenance, bureaucratic fees of any kind (this does not include private fees such as conference fees);
- costs arising from the operation of DFG-funded equipment (e.g. energy costs, repair and maintenance, ongoing technical support);

- expert and court fees, insurance, telephone charges, postage, account maintenance fees;
- value-added tax to the extent that it can be deducted as input tax.

The host institution is expected to provide core support, including appropriate office and laboratory space and equipment.

For usage guidelines, please refer to DFG form 2.22 (available in German only).

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_22

8 Only for International Research Training Groups: Complementary Funding by the Partner Institution

For **IRTGs**, only the German partner university can request DFG funding to cover its project-specific expenses. The foreign partner must guarantee and substantiate complementary funding of the International Research Training Group for the proposed funding period. The IRTG proposal must therefore include a detailed overview of any and all existing, requested and/or awarded funds. Please give a tabular overview, broken down by calendar years, of the funds that the partner institution will or should have available for the following purposes:

- basic funding for the doctoral researchers at the foreign partner institution,
- funds for visits abroad by participating doctoral researchers,
- additional funds for joint activities,
- if applicable, waiver of tuition fees for the doctoral researchers from the German partner university, etc.

Please specify the funding source in each case (e.g. foreign funding agency or host university or institution).

9 Declarations

9.1 Connections to Collaborative Research Centres

If there is a topical connection between the Research Training Group and a Collaborative Research Centre at the same location, a statement by the Collaborative Research Centre on the intended mode of coordination between the two institutions must accompany the proposal. Please refer in this section to the declaration to be provided in the appendix of the proposal. Consider the distinction required as per section 6.2.

9.2 Collaboration with other partners

If you mention specific cooperative arrangements with other local partners (Graduate Schools, Research Units, etc.) in section 6.1, we recommend that declarations by the co-operating institutions be included with the proposal.

9.3 Cooperation with industrial, commercial or service enterprises

If close collaboration between the Research Training Group and industrial, commercial or service enterprises is planned, a cooperation agreement must be concluded. This cooperation agreement should particularly set the terms for the commercial exploitation of research results and for the publication of findings. A copy of the cooperation agreement agreed upon by all parties must be submitted together with the proposal so it can be reviewed by the DFG Head Office. We recommend using the DFG model agreement (DFG form 41.026e).

www.dfg.de/formulare/41_026e

9.4 Doctoral admission of qualifying fellows

If fellowships for qualification students are requested, a statement from the university must be submitted confirming that doctoral admission will be granted upon the successful completion of the (maximum 12-month) qualification phase in the Research Training Group and that appropriate fast-track qualification and/or doctoral programme structures exist or will be established. Please include this statement in the appendix.

9.5 Proposal submission to other funding organisations

If you have already requested funding for this Research Training Group from other organisations, please mention this here.

9.6 Only for International Research Training Groups: Letter of intent from the partner institution

Please refer to the partner university's letter of intent to support the planned cooperation and to provide the required infrastructure. Include the letter of intent in the appendix.

10 Obligations

In submitting a proposal to the DFG, the applicant university and the participating researchers agree to

- adhere to the rules of good scientific practice,
- have adhered to the guidelines regarding publication lists and bibliographies (cf. appendices I and II),
- observe all laws and regulations relevant to the research programme and in particular to attain all necessary approvals, certifications, etc., in a timely manner,
- and – if applicable –
 - inform the DFG immediately if funding for this undertaking is requested from a third party. Proposals previously submitted to a third party and proposals involving major instrumentation must be mentioned in section 9.5 “Proposal submission to other funding organisations”.
 - inform your university's DFG liaison officer about the proposal submission if your university is a DFG member.
 - plan and conduct any experiments involving humans, including research on identifiable human material and data, in compliance with the most current versions of the German Embryo Protection Act (Embryonenschutzgesetz), Stem Cell Act (Stammzellgesetz), Pharmaceutical Drugs Act (Arzneimittelgesetz), Medical Devices Act (Medizinproduktegesetz), and the Declaration of Helsinki.
 - plan and conduct any animal experiments in compliance with the Animal Protection Act (Tierschutzgesetz) and the Experimental Animals Ordinance (Versuchstierverordnung).

- if the research project, or parts thereof, are subject to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to follow the “Guidelines for Funding Proposals Concerning Research Projects within the Scope of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)” (DFG form 1.021).

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_021

- examine whether the proposed project involves dual use research of concern and if so, to weigh the benefits of pursuing this work against the risks of potential misuse and to implement measures to minimise these risks.
- adhere to the provisions of the Genetic Engineering Act (Gentechnikgesetz) with regard to experiments involving genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

I/We accept the foregoing conditions and obligations.

11 Signatures

The proposal for the Research Training Group must be signed by the administration of the German university, the designated spokesperson of the Research Training Group, and for **International Research Training Groups** also the spokesperson at the partner institution. If several German universities are submitting the proposal, it must be signed by the administrations of each one.

Appendix I: Publications and Bibliography (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 and document their preparatory work. Alphabetise them by the last names of the participating researchers 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.

Please note that the total number of items that may be listed under a) and b) combined is limited to ten for each participating researcher. Authorship must be cited unchanged and in accordance with how it appears on the published works. Please number the listed items.

In addition, an unlimited number of patents may be listed (categorised into pending and issued).

When listing works 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.

This list is essential to the review. Please note that the DFG may reject any proposals not in compliance with the rules on publication lists.

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 reviewable without the need to read additional documents. For a more comprehensive presentation of the current state of the art, additional works (by the participating researchers and/or others) may be cited here. To the extent that these are non-published works by the participating researchers, they must be submitted on CD to-

gether with the proposal. On the day of the on-site review, additional publications and manuscripts may be made available to the review panel. However, any additional documents submitted in support of the proposal are not subject to evaluation; reviewers may read them at their own discretion.

Appendix II:

Biographical Sketches of Participating Researchers

Please attach biographical sketches for the participating researchers (for **IRTGs** also those participating at the foreign partner university). If individual employment contracts will end during the course of the Research Training Group, please state this here. To enable reviewers to assess a researcher's scientific track record appropriately, the DFG requests that biographical sketches indicate any circumstances that may have impaired scientific work. Researchers may therefore mention any periods during which they were unable to work continuously, e.g. due to childcare obligations, prolonged illness or disability. The below-mentioned five-year periods with respect to supervised theses and participation in projects with third-party funding are extended by two years for each child.

Each biographical sketch must include a list of the researcher's ten most important publications. These publications need not be related to the proposed Research Training Group.

Please structure each list of publications as follows:

- 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.

Please note that the total number of items that may be listed under a) and b) combined is limited to ten per person. Authorship must be cited unchanged and in accordance with how it appears on the published works. Please number the listed items.

In addition, an unlimited number of patents may be listed (categorised into pending and issued).

When listing works 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 DFG may reject any proposals not in compliance with the rules on publication lists.

Furthermore, the biographical sketches of the participating researchers must document any training of early career researchers within the last five years, including a list of theses supervised (where possible, with time to degree and information on the doctoral graduates' further career development). In addition, participants (for **IRTGs** at least those on the German side) should list key projects in which they were involved in within the last five years that received third-party funding, indicating projects relevant to the Research Training Group.

Annex to the Proposal Preparation Instructions: Guidelines for Conducting Reviews of Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups

A proposal to establish a Research Training Group is reviewed on site at the applicant university. The reviewers form their judgment on the basis of the written information contained in the proposal and the on-site presentation by the Research Training Group.

Based on the results of this review, the Grants Committee on Research Training Groups, which is composed of scientists and academics as well as representatives from the responsible federal and state ministries, decides on the grant. The Grants Committee meets twice a year. It is therefore recommended that applicants get in touch with the responsible contact person at the DFG Head Office as early as possible for information about the next committee meeting dates and associated scheduling.

Information on review criteria can be found in the “Guidelines for Reviewing Proposals to Establish Research Training Groups or International Research Training Groups” (DFG form 1.305).

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_305

1. Objectives and Participants

The main purpose of the review is to provide an opportunity not only for expert reviewers, but also for a scientific member of the Grants Committee on Research Training Groups and for the DFG Head Office to gain an impression of the proposed Research Training Group, the resources at its disposal, and its proposed integration into the research and structural environment. At the same time, the university’s administration is given the opportunity to describe how the Research Training Group will help define the profile of the host institution and how the university will support the Research Training Group.

The task of the scientific member of the Grants Committee on Research Training Groups (rapporteur) is primarily to present the reviewers’ findings to the DFG’s decision-making bodies. In addition, together with the DFG Head Office, the rapporteur is responsible for ensuring that the DFG’s criteria for evaluating Research Training Groups are applied during the review. The Grants Committee on Research Training Groups has deliberately assigned these tasks to a committee member from an unrelated subject area.

The reviewers and the rapporteur can also advise the Research Training Group on the design of the research and qualification programmes and make recommendations for future activities.

The review provides an opportunity for all those involved in the Research Training Group, including the host university, to pass on comments and queries to the DFG.

In addition to the reviewers and the Grants Committee member, one representative each from the relevant state and federal ministries may also participate in the on-site review. As governmental committee members they represent the main backers of the DFG's funding programmes and have an interest in getting to know the local research environment.

For the applicant university, especially the professors who formulated the proposal must be present. In the case of **IRTGs**, it is also expected that professors from the foreign partner university, especially the spokesperson, participate in the review.

As structural aspects play an important part in the establishment of a Research Training Group, it is very helpful if the university, as the applicant, is also represented by a member of its administration. University administrators are therefore especially invited to attend the ***presentation and discussion of the proposal***.

Furthermore, representatives of institutions with which close research and/or structural collaborations are planned should also participate in the review, such as existing graduate institutions with other sources of funding (e.g. graduate schools or Research Training Groups integrated into existing Collaborative Research Centres), non-university research institutions and other cooperation partners.

2. Suggested Schedule for the On-Site Review

The on-site review is generally a one-day event. The exact schedule should be determined in consultation between the applicants and the DFG Head Office. The following agenda is provided as an example and initial orientation for creating a schedule. The programme elements and their sequence are pre-defined. The starting time is flexible. Please note that participation by the university administration must take place at a fixed time.

1 hour 15 min Internal preliminary discussion by the reviewers

(Reviewers, rapporteur, DFG Head Office staff)

It is usually helpful if non-local participants are picked up from the hotel or train station and brought to the meeting location by someone familiar with the area.

2 hours Presentation and discussion of the proposal

(Open to all members of the university; reviewers, rapporteur, representatives of the federal and state ministries, university administration, representatives of university or non-university partners if applicable, DFG Head Office staff)

The participating researchers and the university administration introduce the proposal to the reviewers in one or more presentations. These should include the presentation and discussion of both the scientific and structural aspects of the proposal. For this reason, participation by a university administrator, who may also address brief opening remarks to those participating in the review, is required. Participation by the university administration should therefore be planned well in advance and the scheduled time strictly observed. The applicants are responsible for the presentations. As a rule, the discussion is chaired by the rapporteur. To ensure that the review panel has adequate opportunity for discussion with the applicants, a discussion period of approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes in total should be scheduled.

1 hour Discussion/optional poster presentation/light lunch

(Open to all members of the university; reviewers, rapporteur, representatives of the federal and state ministries, university administration, representatives of university or non-university partners if applicable, DFG Head Office staff)

This agenda item allows further presentation and discussion of the proposal on a more individual basis. Posters may be used to present the proposal in more detail. The members of the review panel and the applicants discuss the proposal individually or in small groups.

Based on previous experience, we recommend that a light lunch be offered to the participants during the review. As the first presentation may finish early, the lunch should be ready early on. The cost should be covered by the host university or the participants.

2 hours 15 min Final consultation by the reviewers

(Reviewers, rapporteur, representatives from the federal and state ministries where applicable, DFG Head Office staff)

In the final internal consultation meeting, the reviewers draft their recommendation to the Senate and Grants Committees on Research Training Groups.

After approx. 6 hours 30 min**End of the review**

The spokesperson is unofficially notified of the reviewers' recommendations to the DFG's Senate and Grants Committees. The review panel's recommendation provides the basis of the decision of the Grants Committee on Research Training Groups.

3. Preparations

As frequent “changes of scenery” often result in a loss of time, we request that you plan for only a limited number of venues with short distances between them. A meeting room is required for the internal consultations between the reviewers. A nearby seminar room would be suitable for the discussions with the Research Training Group. The poster presentations and the light lunch should also take place nearby. To facilitate planning, please inform us as soon as possible of the review venues and include a small map if possible.

The schedule for the review should be sent to all external participants as soon as possible, but at the latest two weeks before the review date. We will provide their names and addresses in a timely manner. **Please discuss the agenda well in advance with the DFG Head Office.**

Since some time will unavoidably pass between the completion of the proposal and the on-site review, you may want to prepare a **handout** for the reviewers briefly documenting any relevant changes.

Please note that providing pin-on name tags and table nameplates for all participants has proven useful in the past.

Finally, please reserve hotel rooms for any visiting participants from out of town who intend to stay overnight. We will inform the participants accordingly. Please observe the applicable maximum rates under the German Travel Expenses Act when making reservations. If possible, please arrange for the hotel invoice to be sent directly to the DFG. If this is not possible, participants should pay the hotel invoice themselves and claim reimbursement from the DFG Head Office later.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.