Guidelines
Sample Bylaws
for Collaborative Research Centres

Preliminary note

The exclusive purpose of the bylaws of a Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) is to regulate internal relationships within the CRC. The relationships between the CRC or the coordinating university (grant recipient) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) are regulated by the funding guidelines and other DFG forms.

www.dfg.de/foerderung/formulare

The sample bylaws are not designed to address all issues that need to be regulated in the statutes of a Collaborative Research Centre. Rather, they represent a minimum set of rules, with specifics to be filled in and further provisions to be added as needed by the CRC. Additional explanations and comments can be found in the footnotes. Furthermore, the provisions of the Framework Act for Higher Education (Hochschulrahmengesetz), the relevant State Higher Education Act (Landeshochschulgesetz), other laws, and the internal regulations of the coordinating university must be considered when drafting the CRC bylaws. For a CRC/Transregio, the sample bylaws must be adapted to the differing circumstances (multiple applicant universities and locations).
§ 1  Name, coordinating university, purpose of the Collaborative Research Centre

1. The Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) <title> is an institution of <name of coordinating university>.¹

2. The Collaborative Research Centre conducts interrelated research projects in the areas of <research areas>. It is divided into project areas and projects.

3. Furthermore, the Collaborative Research Centre promotes interaction with other research institutions, supports early career researchers, and fosters international cooperation and equal opportunities.

§ 2  Membership²

1. A member of the Collaborative Research Centre may be any person who belongs to one of the participating universities or other participating research institutions and has demonstrated in the research field of the Collaborative Research Centre the ability to conduct independent research (generally after completing a doctorate). Membership is not contingent upon funding under the Collaborative Research Centre.

2. Researchers may apply for membership in the Collaborative Research Centre with its Executive Board. Membership applications shall be decided by <an absolute / a simple> majority vote of the General Body.

3. Membership shall end when the member notifies the Spokesperson in writing of his/her withdrawal from the Collaborative Research Centre.

4. The loss or revocation of membership shall be decided by <at least equal to admission requirement> majority vote of the General Body.

¹ The coordinating university is not necessarily the Spokesperson’s university, but the university that submits the combined funding proposal to the DFG.
² Habilitation is not an appropriate minimum requirement for membership in a Collaborative Research Centre. Not making formal qualification a mandatory requirement for membership has the advantage of permitting case-by-case decisions on the basis of candidates’ individual qualifications. As the researchers of the CRC are in the best position to judge qualifications at their institution, membership decisions should lie with the Collaborative Research Centre.
§ 3 Rights and obligations of members

1. Members of the Collaborative Research Centre are eligible in principle to submit project outlines to the committee of the Collaborative Research Centre that is responsible for the preparation of the combined funding proposal.³

2. Members shall collaborate, advise and support each other. Shared facilities and the resources of the Collaborative Research Centre may be used by all members to the extent possible.

3. Members shall contribute to planning and organisation, early career support, gender equality promotion, and administration within the Collaborative Research Centre in accordance with these bylaws.

4. Publications based on research conducted by the Collaborative Research Centre must include a reference to DFG funding.

5. Each principal investigator must submit a progress report on the project after the funding period or project expires. Termination of membership does not affect this obligation.

6. If a principal investigator withdraws from the Collaborative Research Centre, the instrumentation and funds awarded for the project may not be transferred to another location as a general rule. Any other solution (e.g. transfer of instrumentation) requires the approval of the Executive Board of the Collaborative Research Centre and of the chancellor of the coordinating university. The DFG must be notified of any transfer of instrumentation with a purchase price over €10,000 during the term of the Collaborative Research Centre.

³ However, general rules (one predominant institution, requirements for principal investigators, etc.) must be observed.
§ 4 Organisational structure and bodies of the Collaborative Research Centre

1. The Collaborative Research Centre has the following bodies:
   a) General Body
   b) <Assembly of Principal Investigators>
   c) Executive Board
   d) Spokesperson

2. Principal investigators shall be researchers who led the conception of the research project.

§ 5 Duties of the General Body

1. The General Body has the following duties:
   a) Admission of members and decision on the termination of membership
   b) Adoption and amendment of the bylaws
   c) Adoption of the combined funding proposal
   d) Election of the Spokesperson, the Deputy Spokesperson, and other members of the Executive Board
   e) Decision on the rules for shared use of research results and publication of synthesis papers (incl. definition of terms, rights and obligations, and agreed time limits and waiting periods)
   f) Acceptance of the report of the Spokesperson
   g) Decision on the allocation procedure (§ 8) for centrally managed funds
   h) <if applicable, election of the members of the committees>

4 Depending on the structure of the overall research programme (number and scientific proximity of disciplines involved, their thematic and methodological connections) and the size of the Collaborative Research Centre (number of projects and project areas, number of members), different forms of organisation may be useful. Especially for scientifically homogeneous, smaller Collaborative Research Centres, the bodies specified in a), c) and d) are usually sufficient, provided that the Executive Board reflects the combination of subject areas in the Collaborative Research Centre. Large Collaborative Research Centres involving a relatively large number of disciplines usually require an additional decision-making body, especially for coordination tasks. In Collaborative Research Centres of medium size, coordination tasks may be performed by the Assembly of Principal Investigators, provided that they are not too numerous for such a body to function effectively. Such a body has the advantage of allowing principal investigators to speak directly, whereas the above-mentioned additional body is elected and thus a representative body.
2. The General Body shall assign the following duties to the Assembly of Principal Investigators, to a committee, or to the Executive Board:

a) Development and coordination of the research programme
b) Preparation of the combined funding proposal, internal preliminary assessment of project proposals, and decisions on modifications of financial aspects of project proposals
c) Decision on the inclusion of new projects during the funding period
d) Programme-modifying funding actions during the current funding period (e.g. termination of a project for substantive reasons, initial funding of a new project)
e) Deliberation on the proposal / purchase of instrumentation used by multiple projects
f) Preparation / organisation of scientific events of the Collaborative Research Centre

3. The election of the Spokesperson and of the members of the Executive Board, and amendments to the bylaws shall be decided by <an absolute (more than half of members) / a qualified (e.g. at least two-thirds of members)> majority vote of the General Body. Except as provided in § 2 (2) of the bylaws, the General Body shall decide in all other cases with <a simple> majority vote (majority of those present). The General Body shall be quorate if at least half of its members are present.

4. The General Body shall be convened by the Spokesperson of the Collaborative Research Centre with a notice period of at least <number> days; the agenda must be sent to all members no later than <number> days before the meeting. The General Body must also be convened at the request of <proportion> of the members of the Collaborative Research Centre with the same notice period.

§ 6 Duties and composition of the Executive Board

1. The Executive Board is composed of the Spokesperson, the Deputy Spokesperson and <one or three> other member(s). It shall decide by a simple majority. The Executive Board shall be quorate if at least <proportion> of its members are present.

2. Members of the Executive Board are elected for a term of <at least two> years. The General Body may vote the Executive Board or any of its members out of office at any time with <at

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5 It is recommended to include an early career researcher in the Executive Board.
least equal to election requirement> majority. The Spokesperson may be voted out of office only if a new Spokesperson is elected at the same time.

3. In addition to any duties assigned by the General Body (§ 5 (2) of the bylaws), the Executive Board is responsible for the following:

   a) Personnel decisions
   b) Participation in the hiring and termination (by the university or participating institutions) of employees who are compensated from CRC funds (after consultation with the relevant principal investigators)\(^6\)
   c) Nominations for the election of committee members
   d) Proposals for the admission and exclusion of members
   e) Decisions on major reallocation requests
   f) Consultations with the university administration / heads of departments or faculties regarding core support and appointments
   g) Design and organisation of measures to promote early career researchers and equal opportunities
   h) All matters not within the jurisdiction of the Spokesperson or other governing body

§ 7 Duties and term of office of the Spokesperson

1. Anyone holding a full-time professorship at the <coordinating university or other applicant university> who is eligible to serve on the academic senate and is a member of the Collaborative Research Centre is eligible to be elected Spokesperson or Deputy Spokesperson. He/she shall lead the central administrative project but shall not be required to lead a research project.

2. The Spokesperson shall chair the Executive Board, the Assembly of Principal Investigators and the General Body, and represent the Collaborative Research Centre externally (e.g. towards the university administration and the DFG).

3. The duties of the Spokesperson include:

\(^6\) The right to propose candidates when recruiting university administrative staff should be with the researcher (principal investigator) who will work with the new hires.
- Managing current business including the ongoing management and accounting of funds as well as decisions on minor reallocation requests
- Convening meetings of the Executive Board, the Assembly of Principal Investigators and the General Body
- Informing members and staff

4. The term of office shall be <at least two> years.⁷

§ 8 Procedure for the allocation of centrally managed funds⁸

1. Travel funds
2. Visiting researcher funds
3. Lump-sum funds
4. Gender-equality funds
5. <...>

§ 9 Final provisions

Following prior consultation with the DFG, the Collaborative Research Centre shall adopt these bylaws in consultation with the applicant university.

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⁷ A term of office of the Spokesperson of only one year is not recommended. If frequent personnel change in the office of the Spokesperson is desired, the Spokesperson should be chosen from among the members of the Executive Board so as to ensure continuity in the conduct of business.

⁸ The CRC must elaborate decision procedures for these categories.