

## **On-Site Review Questions for Evaluating *Renewal Proposals* for Clinical Research Units**

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Clinical Research Units promote close collaboration between highly qualified scientists working on thematic projects within clinical institutions. They are generally established for a period of six years. Clinical Research Units pursue clinical investigations, integrate clinical findings, and may conduct clinical pilot studies. They focus on translational research with patient-oriented approaches and on understanding disease mechanisms.

Clinical Research Units aim to

- improve the quality of clinical research by creating and strengthening research-oriented structures within university hospitals,
- establish or strengthen educational structures in clinical research institutions,
- give qualified younger research scientists new development/career opportunities,
- strengthen the scientific profile of the location and the institution at which the Clinical Research Unit is primarily located,
- support the efficient allocation of funds for clinical research, in particular funds allotted by the German states to the university clinics and medical departments,
- intensify cooperation between clinicians and researchers in the field of applied medical sciences,
- enhance cooperation between research groups at universities, non-university institutions and in industry (where applicable),
- strengthen international cooperation.

The proposal you have been sent is for a second funding period. In preparing your assessment, please consider the following:

## **I. The position of the Clinical Research Unit**

1. What progress and results were achieved by this Clinical Research Unit during the previous funding period? To what extent were the achievements enabled by the collaborative structure of the Clinical Research Unit? How did the participating researchers use the collaborative structure to promote interaction and exchange? Whose influence and support is especially strong in this Clinical Research Unit? What problems arose, either in content or methodology, and how were they solved?
2. What developments were made in the Clinical Research Unit's field of research by other scientists worldwide, and to what extent did the Clinical Research Unit contribute to this?
3. How would you assess the prospects of this Clinical Research Unit in terms of national and international competitiveness? Is the overall research programme well defined, i.e. coherent and feasible within the proposed time period?
4. Do you believe Dr. XXX, who is the coordinator of this Clinical Research Unit and who holds the DFG-funded W3/W2 professorship position, has the appropriate expertise and background to carry out this position? Are you convinced of her/his leadership and contribution to the results of this Clinical Research Unit in general?
5. Should additional scientists, disciplines, or institutions be involved during the second funding period?
6. What is your impression of the young researchers involved within this Clinical Research Unit? How would you assess the career prospects for young scientists in this field of research, both within and outside academia? How would you assess existing or proposed measures to promote young researchers?
7. Were the gender equality measures described in the first proposal implemented by the Clinical Research Unit? Does the renewal proposal include new measures/strategies and if so, are they convincing?
8. Is the university well suited to continue hosting this Clinical Research Unit with regard to existing infrastructure (institutes, personnel, equipment, etc.) in this field of research? How does it compare to other institutions? How would you assess the host university's commitment to this Clinical Research Unit?
9. Are the modalities for providing performance-based government subsidies for research and education at the host university's medical department convincing? Has the host institution ensured that the facilities and resources required will be available for a second funding period? Has space been allocated based on performance in the past, and do you expect this to continue?
10. How did the group and the medical department integrate and promote young researchers? Were there any training programmes/structures and/or special measures taken to advance young scientists, particularly medical researchers? What measures are planned for the second funding period? Can research clinicians be released from patient-care obligations (rotation programmes)?
11. Do you recommend approval of this Clinical Research Unit for a second funding period?

## II. Individual projects

1. Are the applicants adequately qualified, both in general and for this specific project? Does the project build on previous work? Do the applicants have proven publication records? How is the state of the art taken into account?
2. How would you assess the results generated by the researchers so far?
  - How would you evaluate the progress made, both in terms of content and methodology, since the last review?
  - How would you rank the output in international comparison?
  - What publications were produced during the previous funding period, and how would you assess their quality?
  - What forms of cooperation were observed with other individual projects within the Clinical Research Unit? Did they result in joint publications?
3. How would you assess the project's work programme for the next funding period according to the following criteria:
  - the potential for gaining new insights in the project's field, the broader research field or other applications,
  - originality, innovation and risk,
  - relevant preliminary work,
  - the present state of knowledge in the field, methodology, objectives, experimental plan, feasibility,
  - long-term concept beyond the duration of the project.
4. Is the project strongly connected to the Clinical Research Unit as a whole, or could it be considered marginal?
  - To what extent is this project necessary for other projects?
  - What means of collaboration are planned with other projects? Does the proposed collaboration appear beneficial?
5. Should funding be contingent on certain recommendations and/or conditions? Do you have any suggestions that should be passed on to the applicants?
6. Are the requested funds (for staff, consumables and instrumentation) appropriate with regard to the work load?
7. If applicable: Are the funds requested for experiments involving animals necessary (species and number of animals, upkeep of laboratory animals, etc.)?
8. How would you assess the project in terms of international competitiveness based on the results to date and future plans?  
Excellent — very good — good — not worth funding

Do you recommend approval of this project for a second funding period? For new projects: Do you recommend funding this project?