

Guidelines

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

I General Information

Reviewers are asked to comment in detail on each of the four criteria listed below and provide a final assessment. In addition, each item should be given a final rating of A, B or C (A = positive, convincing; B = average, borderline; C = negative, not convincing). The rating will aid in the interpretation of your comments. The evaluation should focus in particular on the qualification of the participating scientists and academics as well as on the quality of the research programme.

For International Research Training Groups, please also comment on the added value resulting from the international cooperation with regard to each criterion.

When preparing your review, please bear in mind that the DFG will forward your comments in anonymised form to the spokesperson of the proposed Research Training Group.

II Review Criteria

1 Research Programme

- Please assess the quality, scientific relevance and originality of the Research Training Group's main research topic or research idea. How would you assess the novelty of the research programme in international comparison?

- In what way do you consider it forward-looking to establish a Research Training Group with this focus, considering that the key mission of such a group is to promote early career researchers?
- Please assess whether the research programme justifies the expectation that the main topic will be explored appropriately in projects and theses. Has substantial preliminary work been carried out? Can ambitious doctoral research projects be expected?
- Is the research programme adequately focussed and coherent?

Text:

Rating:

A	B	C

2 Participating Researchers (Applicant Team)

Please comment on the scientific credentials of the participating scientists and academics with regard to the proposed main research topic or research idea as well as regarding their experience in training early career researchers.

- To what extent have they distinguished themselves in their research activities and publications to date?
- How would you assess their individual expertise with regard to the proposed main topic or research idea?
- To what extent are the participating researchers experienced in training early career researchers?

Text:

Rating:

A	B	C

Please comment on the scientific composition of the team of applicants and their proposed cooperation with regard to the research and qualification programmes.

- To what extent does the team of applicants combine the subject-matter expertise necessary to successfully carry out the research and qualification programmes?
- Have the members of the team taught and/or carried out research together in the past?
- Has appropriate consideration been given to diversity in the research system and the integration of female researchers?
- Is the participation of early career researchers in the Research Training Group planned or expected?

Text:

Rating:

A	B	C

3 Qualification Programme and Supervision Strategy

Do the draft qualification strategy and the relevant preliminary work justify the expectation that early career researchers will be trained successfully?

Does the proposal incorporate supervisory structures that promote systematic, transparent, and timely completion of doctoral training?

Text:

Rating:

A	B	C

4 Environment

Please comment on whether the scientific environment is especially suited to successfully work on the proposed main research topic or research idea in the framework of a Research Training Group.

Text:

Rating:

A	B	C

Since it is possible to propose a “module for structured doctoral training” as part of the Collaborative Research Centre programme, Collaborative Research Centres and Research Training Groups that are based at the same location and have largely overlapping topics should not receive parallel funding. The goal is to increase efficiency by bundling funding for closely related research projects. If the Research Training Group is closely related to a Collaborative Research Centre at the same location, please comment on whether the Research Training Group’s topic or structure is sufficiently unique. For instance, the establishment of an International Research Training Group may be considered to deliver added value.

If the draft proposal is linked to an existing Research Training Group or one that has ended, please explain why the topic of the proposed Research Training Group is sufficiently distinct and to what extent the research programme investigates new scientific problems.

Text:

5 Final Assessment

Please provide a final assessment on whether you consider the concept as a whole promising. Should the university be asked to submit a proposal?

Text:

Rating:

A	B	C

III Additional Aspects of the Review

1 Confidentiality

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

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

2 Obligation to Observe the Principles of Good Scientific Practice¹

The principles of good scientific practice must also be observed during the review process. A violation of these principles can result in a charge of scientific misconduct. In particular, any infringement against the principles set out in "Guideline 16: Confidentiality and neutrality of review processes and discussions" is considered scientific misconduct.

¹ The principles of good scientific practice are presented in detail in the DFG Code of Conduct [Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#).

3 Conflicts of Interest

The DFG Head Office is not able to investigate all circumstances that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest. The DFG therefore relies on your assistance, e.g. to enable us to contact another reviewer for a written assessment in a timely manner or to jointly determine whether your participation in the review meeting would be appropriate.

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

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

http://www.dfg.de/formulare/10_201/

4 Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Research

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

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

<http://www.dfg.de/diversity/en>