Guidelines

for the Review of Draft Proposals and Proposals under the Funding Instrument “Research Impulses”

Disclaimer: The English translation of this document is provided for informational purposes. In the event of a discrepancy between the English and the German versions, the German text takes precedence.

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
Kennedyallee 40 · 53175 Bonn, Germany · Postal address: 53170 Bonn, Germany
Tel.: + 49 228 885-1 · Fax: + 49 228 885-2777 · postmaster@dfg.de · www.dfg.de

Preliminary Note

The review follows the criteria listed in section I, which result from the objectives of the programme. A detailed description of these objectives is to be found in the “Research Impulses” guidelines (DFG form 50.11).

www.dfg.de/formulare/50_11

In any case, please consider the formal aspects of the review as set out in section II. If you have any questions, please contact the person responsible for the review in the Excellence Strategy and Research Impulses Group at the DFG Head Office.

I Criteria for the Review

Please note that the overall objectives of a Research Impulse:

- better use of the potential of particularly research-oriented universities of applied sciences (HAW/FH) (in terms of staff, infrastructure, strategy)
- improvement of the conditions for knowledge-driven scientific research at universities of applied sciences
- prioritisation of content and profile-building at universities of applied sciences

should be taken into account when reviewing the Research Impulse based on all the criteria mentioned below.

1 Quality and coherence of the research project

The following aspects are relevant in assessing the quality and coherence of the research project:

- Scientific quality of the project (esp. topic, objectives, coherence, convincing programme of work, knowledge gain, innovative approach, consideration of the current state of research and, where applicable, prospects of application)
- Feasibility of the research project (scientific objectives, planning and structuring of the work programme and, where applicable, project-specific/thematically relevant preliminary work)
- Quality and added value of cooperation within the consortium

- Adequacy of research data management
- Quality management, leadership and coordination of the group as a whole

2 Priority research areas and research environment

Aspects for assessing the criterion “Priority research areas and research environment” can include the following:

- Further development of innovative research profiles in the field of knowledge-driven research
- Compatibility with/differentiation from previous measures and strategies for priority research areas and research profile development
- Added value of cooperation within the applicant HAW/FH and with other institutions such as higher education institutions, non-university institutions, small and medium-sized enterprises and/or social institutions in the regional and cross-regional and national/international environment
- Embedding of the priority research area in teaching
- Promotion of diversity, gender equality
- Promotion of early career researchers

3 Qualification of the persons involved and composition of the group

Aspects that best illustrate the qualification of the individuals involved and the appropriate composition of the group include the following:

- Relevant expertise and, where appropriate, complementary nature of individual participants’ qualifications
- Composition of the group (e.g. disciplinary backgrounds, career stages, equal opportunities)
- Achievements and performance potential with reference to the subject area of the proposal.

  Any publicly available results of preliminary work may be included in the review, along with experience gained from previous employment, for example.
- Visibility and (national/international) network in the scientific community as well as in relevant target groups, e.g. in business and society

4 Long-term funding of structures and improvement of research conditions

In the case of **draft proposals and proposals to establish a research impulse**, there should be an assessment of whether there is evidence of coherent prospects for the lasting funding of the structures.

In the case of **renewal proposals**, it should be examined whether sufficient efforts are being made on the part of the applicant university of applied sciences and the respective host state to provide long-term support for the research focus so that the research focus and the research profile of the university of applied sciences can foreseeably develop a long-term impact.

The following aspects might serve as possible indicators:

- Personnel and infrastructural structures have been secured
- Priorities have been set in the higher education development plans
- Development planning, positions, long-term perspectives

II Formal Aspects of the Review

1 Confidentiality

All proposals submitted to the DFG, correspondence with reviewers and the reviews themselves are to be treated confidentially. The confidentiality of the third-party content to which you have access as a reviewer precludes disclosure to third parties and utilisation for your own and/or third-party research purposes. This also means that the task of review may only be carried out by the reviewer in person and may not be delegated to third parties. We ask you not to identify yourself as a reviewer to third parties – in the case of written reviews, this includes the applicants themselves. This allows the DFG to release the content and arguments of the reviews in a completely anonymised and if necessary redacted form to applicants.

2 Conflicts of interest

At each stage of the proposal process, the DFG Head Office examines whether there may be any appearance of bias, favouritism or conflict of interest. However, not all circumstances that might raise doubts about the neutrality of reviewers and members of the responsible decision-making bodies are verifiable by the DFG.
We therefore ask you yourself to verify carefully and at an early stage whether there are any reasons that might give rise to the appearance of bias. For details, see DFG form 10.201.

www.dfg.de/formulare/10_201

Should circumstances exist that may be interpreted as a conflict of interest, please inform the responsible DFG staff before submitting your written vote 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 only become aware that there may be or may have been an apparent conflict of interest after submitting your written vote or attending a meeting, you should also contact the DFG Head Office immediately.

3 Equity and diversity

In all of its funding programmes, the DFG actively promotes diversity and equity in the German research system. For this reason, 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 the applicant's age. You may compensate in your evaluation for certain extra-scientific disadvantages. Unavoidable delays in an applicant's scientific career (for example longer training periods, publication gaps or less time spent abroad as a result of childcare responsibilities) should be given adequate consideration. Further information on diversity and equal opportunities in research can be found at:

www.dfg.de/diversity/en

In order to be able to make non-discriminatory, science-led funding decisions, it is important for the evaluation process to be based solely on the above criteria and free of non-scientific factors. Regularly engaging with the topic of bias can sensitise people to their own, often unconscious prejudices, thereby counteracting any potential bias in assessment. For further information, please refer to the recommendations and background material that are available at:

www.dfg.de/bias/en

4 Obligation to observe the principles of good research practice[1]

The principles of good research practice must also be observed during the review processes. A violation of these principles can result in a charge of scientific misconduct. Scientific misconduct is defined as the intentional and grossly negligent statement of falsehoods in a scientific context, the violation of intellectual property rights or impeding another person's research work, or breaching the principles set out in the section on confidentiality. The circumstances of each case shall be considered on an individual basis. In cases where scientific misconduct has been established, the DFG may impose one or more sanctions in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, depending on the nature and severity of the misconduct. Further information on good research practice can be found at:

www.dfg.de/good_scientific_practice

[1] The principles of good research practice can be found in detail in the DFG Code of Conduct - Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice.

Important Information:

The DFG is looking closely at the potential uses of artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of generative models for text and image creation – both in research work itself and when submitting proposals to the DFG. When submitting proposals to the DFG, the use of generative models is permissible because of the considerable opportunities and development potential they offer, but such usage must be disclosed in a scientifically appropriate manner. The use of generative models is to be assessed neutrally per se when it comes to evaluating the subject-specific quality of a funding proposal. As far as the content of a proposal is concerned, full responsibility for research integrity remains with the applicants. Documents that are provided to you for review are confidential and they may not be used as input for generative models. The use of generative models in the preparation of reviews is inadmissible in any case due to the confidentiality of the review process. What is more, the processing of proposal content using a generative model may constitute a copyright infringement.

Proposal specifics regarding the aspects of “risks in international cooperation” and “considerations on ecological sustainability aspects in the planning and implementation of the project” as listed in the information accompanying the planned project and relating to the context of the research are not the subject of the scientific review in the sense described above. Instead, a straightforward plausibility check within the scope of your expertise will help the evaluation and decision-making bodies gain an overall impression of these aspects of the proposal.