

Progress Report Preparation Instructions

for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups (Renewal Proposals)



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

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A. General Information

These instructions specify the form and the required content of the progress report that constitutes part of the renewal proposal for a Research Training Group (RTG) or an International Research Training Group (IRTG). The report must be submitted to the DFG's elan portal as a separate attachment to the renewal proposal. In compiling the proposal, please follow the "Proposal Preparation Instructions for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups (Renewal Proposals)" (DFG form 54.07).

www.dfg.de/formulare/54_07

While the renewal proposal should explain the plans for the second funding period, the progress report should provide a concise summary of the activities and results from the first funding period. For International Research Training Groups (IRTGs), the report will be prepared jointly by both partner organisations. The report must describe the contributions and measures provided by the foreign partner institution in sufficient detail to allow evaluation. Please take into account that the reviewers have no access to the initial proposal. Your renewal proposal and progress report should therefore be self-explanatory. Direct references to the first proposal should be avoided.

In the case of adverse effects on research activity and biographies due to the coronavirus pandemic, relevant statements can be included at a suitable point in the report. Please underpin your description with concrete details on the duration and extent of the adverse circumstances. For further information, see the "Guidelines in the Case of Adverse Effects on Research Projects and Biographies due to the Pandemic" (DFG form 55.07).

www.dfg.de/formulare/55_07

One copy of the progress report must be sent together with the renewal proposal to the responsible state ministry for comment.

Please make your proposal informative and clear in order to provide the DFG reviewers with a good basis for a balanced and appropriate assessment. Please be sure to meet the following obligatory requirements:

- The report – not including cover page, table of contents and appendices – must not exceed 30 pages (for RTGs) or 40 pages (for **IRTGs**) in length (DIN A4, Arial 11pt or similar font, single-spaced).
- The following additional information should be appended to the report: overview lists of the persons funded by the Research Training Group and their activities within the framework of the Research Training Group, the duration of employment (or fellowship) contracts, the number of researchers participating in the Research Training Group and their qualification levels, individual reports by the (post)doctoral researchers, a list of their publications and publications of the RTG, an example of the supervision agreement used, and, where applicable, reports on any sabbaticals and knowledge transfer projects funded by the RTG (see explanations in the appendix). Other than these items, the appendix may not include any additional information.

Reports that exceed the allowable length will not be accepted.

- The report must address all the items specified in the template and include all section numbers and titles. Please avoid repetition and refer instead to the relevant report or proposal section(s).
- The report must be prefaced by a table of contents including page numbers.
- Complete all tables/charts provided and augment the report with additional tables and graphs where appropriate.
- The report for a Research Training Group may be written in German or English.
- The report for an IRTG should usually be written in English. Other languages should be used only after consulting with the DFG Head Office first.

If you will be transmitting the personal data of third parties as part of your progress report, you ensure that doing so is in compliance with relevant data protection laws.

Please note the DFG's data protection notice on research funding, which can be viewed and downloaded at www.dfg.de/privacy_policy. If necessary, please also forward this information to those individuals whose data will be processed by the DFG due to their involvement in your project.

If, in preparing your report, you used artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of generative models for text and image creation, please disclose this fact in a scientifically appropriate manner in your report. For more information, see the [“Research Integrity” portal](#).

B. Report Template

<Title>

<Applicant university/universities>

<For International Research Training Groups: Foreign partner institution>

<Spokespersons for the first funding period>

First 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 Research Training Group or International Research Training Group (IRTG) in German and English.

1.2 Participating researchers

Please name the spokespersons and all professors who have been involved in running the Research Training Group since its inception and include their area of research.

Please explain any changes in the group of participating researchers between the submission of the first proposal and submission of the renewal proposal.

For **IRTGs**, please include a second table listing the professors participating from the foreign partner institution and their area of research.

Last name, first name, academic title	Research area

1.3 Reporting period

Please list the funding period covered by the report.

1.4 Number of doctoral researchers, doctoral researchers in medicine, postdoctoral researchers, qualifying fellows and student assistants

Use the table to list:

- the number of doctoral researchers, doctoral researchers in medicine, postdoctoral researchers, qualifying fellows and student assistants funded by the Research Training Group;
- the number of participating doctoral and postdoctoral researchers with funding from other sources;
- for **IRTGs**, in addition the number of participating doctoral and postdoctoral researchers at the partner institution.

	Number
Individuals funded through the Research Training Group	
Doctoral researchers <i>[position with XX % of full-time hours]</i>	
Doctoral researchers in medicine	
Postdoctoral researchers	
Qualifying fellows	
Student assistants	
Individuals funded from other sources	
Doctoral researchers	
Doctoral researchers in medicine	
Postdoctoral researchers	

2. Integration of Reviewers’ Comments

If you were given any instructions, advice or recommendations from the review of the first proposal, please comment on these. Describe whether and how these have been implemented during the first funding period. If you did not receive any specific comments, this section may be omitted.

3. Research Programme

Please summarise the research activities performed to date and the scientific findings achieved during the first funding period. Please describe how the central research idea was implemented during the first funding period and, if applicable, how it evolved. What thematic networking – in the case of **IRTGs** particularly between the partner locations – has taken place within the Research Training Group?

For **IRTGs**: In particular, please describe the specific scientific added value which has resulted from the international cooperation.

Reports on the individual projects carried out by the doctoral researchers, the postdoctoral researchers and, where applicable, by the qualifying fellows and student assistants should be included in appendix 3 in accordance with the templates provided (see the explanations in the appendices).

4. Qualification Programme

4.1 Qualification programme

Please describe the RTG's current qualification programme and its implementation. The description of the qualification programme must include the following information:

- a table of all RTG-specific courses – in the case of **IRTGs** those held at one of the locations or jointly – including type, duration, frequency, contents, target group, instructor, and whether participation is compulsory for RTG members in all locations;
- a table listing any complementary courses from the universities' general programmes or other (external) programmes, if applicable;
- where applicable, list and describe any training in the rules of good research practice offered within the framework of the qualification programme;
- where applicable, a list of training courses held on key skills;
- where applicable, training courses held on research involving animal experiments;
- where applicable, training courses on the collection, storage, editing and long-term provision of research data;
- where applicable, a description of the special programme elements of any qualification phase preceding the doctoral phase for qualifying fellows;
- where applicable, the methods used to integrate student assistants into the qualification programme;

- a description of how the transition from the current generation of doctoral researchers to the next was handled.

4.2 Visiting researcher programme

Please explain the programme implemented and append an overview of the visiting researchers invited, together with a brief outline of their activities relating to the Research Training Group and the length of their stay.

4.3 Additional qualification measures and (for IRTGs) research visits to the partner institution

Please describe additional measures that were offered and employed to further the research and professional qualification of doctoral researchers, such as research visits to other universities and internships at cultural institutions or businesses.

For **IRTGs**: Please comment particularly on visits made by doctoral researchers to the relevant partner institution abroad. Describe how these visits were coordinated, the role they played in the research programme and how they were integrated into the doctoral phase.

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

5.1 Announcement and selection procedure

Please provide information on the methods used to recruit candidates for the Research Training Group. Describe the criteria used to select suitable candidates and the admission procedure. Describe the number and quality of the applications received and provide an assessment of these. If you also recruited for postdoctoral positions, please detail the announcement and selection processes for these positions accordingly. Please describe any joint selection committees and processes used in **IRTGs**.

5.2 Supervision and career advancement

Please describe the individual supervision model developed by the Research Training Group for the individual doctoral researchers. Your explanation should address the following questions:

- How were advisors for the individual doctoral researchers chosen?
- How was supervision designed and organised? Were the supervisory structures successful? Did joint or committee supervision take place?

- For **IRTGs**: How were both international partners involved in the supervision of doctoral researchers? How will researchers on the German side contribute to supervising doctoral researchers from the partner institution? Was a joint supervision strategy implemented and if so, what do you consider the added value of this concept? Did any problems occur on account of the joint supervision? How was adequate supervision ensured during researchers' visits to partner institutions abroad?
- How was the doctoral researchers' scientific independence supported? Did the Research Training Group help plan lecture trips and visits abroad? Were participants encouraged to publish? How were doctoral researchers introduced to and integrated into the national and international research network?
- Were regular progress checks arranged and, if so, how were they carried out? Were performance reports issued?
- Were any agreements (such as supervision agreements) made between the Research Training Group and the doctoral researchers which stipulated the rights and obligations on both sides? An example of the agreement used must be included in appendix 6.

If, during the first funding period, start-up funding was made available to researchers who completed their doctorates within the framework of the Research Training Group, please explain how these individuals were selected to receive such funding, what supporting measures were undertaken by both the Research Training Group and the university (equipment, etc.) to foster their scientific independence, for example by supporting the creation of their own independent proposals.

Please also explain how their careers have developed since. In the appendices, please provide detailed descriptions of how many persons received funding, the duration of the funding period and the form (position, fellowship and/or direct project costs) in which the funding was provided (see Template 1f).

If the Research Training Group was provided with resources to fund postdoctoral positions, please describe relevant qualification and career development activities offered by the RTG and the university. Reference may also be made to the individual reports by postdoctoral researchers (Appendix 3b).

5.3 Promotion of equality

Please describe the measures already adopted by the university and/or other participating institutions to promote gender equality for researchers, diversity in research and the compatibility of research and family. Explain how the Research Training Group has benefited from existing structures and programmes and what additional measures have been adopted by the Research Training Group.

5.4 Organisation

Please describe the organisational structure of the Research Training Group as it developed during the first funding period and the specific modalities of management. Please describe, for example, the decision-making processes which were established, how and by whom the qualification and visiting researcher programmes were organised, and what opportunities doctoral researchers were given to help shape the RTG.

For **IRTGs**: Please detail how cooperation between the partners was coordinated. You should also describe the rules according to which doctoral degrees were granted, which institution awarded them, or whether joint doctoral degrees were awarded.

5.5 Additional aspects of quality management

Additional quality management aspects include, for example, the collection and usage of data within the Research Training Group, the criteria used to evaluate the success of the results to date, targeted measures and, where appropriate, any changes that have been made in order to optimise the joint research and qualification programmes. Please comment on these points.

6. Environment of the Research Training Group

Please describe the scientific and structural environment of the Research Training Group – in the case of **IRTGs** at all partner locations – taking into account the following aspects:

- the RTG's integration to date into the university's research environment and infrastructure, e.g. in Germany networking and cooperation with other coordinated funding programmes, such as Collaborative Research Centres and Research Units, Clusters of Excellence and federal, state and EU programmes;
- networking and cooperation with non-university research institutions;

- the positioning of the Research Training Group compared to other local programmes for researchers in early career phases and structured doctoral training programmes, for Germany particularly in relation to graduate schools or any cooperation between these programmes and the RTG;
- how the RTG fits into the existing academic structure, in particular with regard to current exam regulations. If the Research Training Group plans to implement an additional qualification phase for fellows with a bachelor's or other degree that, according to the relevant examination regulations, is not recognised as a doctoral admission requirement, please provide more information on this scheme;
- the structural and scientific impact of the Research Training Group on academic structures, doctoral degree regulations, the creation of core research focus areas, etc. For **IRTGs**, this item refers to the German university.

Research Training Groups are university training programmes established for a specific time period. The German university is expected to provide core support, including appropriate office and laboratory space and equipment. Additionally, the German university is called upon to provide active support for the Research Training Group, for instance by

- furnishing additional direct project funding and coordination funds,
- furnishing additional funding for completion of theses in instances where the maximum funding period has been exceeded and/or after the Research Training Group has finished,
- providing childcare opportunities,
- supporting doctoral researchers from abroad,
- considering the involvement of professors in the Research Training Group when assigning teaching loads and awarding performance-related funds.

Please provide a description of all such supportive activities provided by the German university.

If the **IRTG** will be structurally integrated into the partner institution(s), if relevant, please describe this and any other support measures provided.

7. Summary and Outlook

Finally, please provide an interim report of the first funding period. Please summarise your experiences during the first funding period and how you have used or will use these to further the development of the Research Training Group. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding how to enhance the Research Training Group funding programme, we invite you to share them with us.

For **IRTGs**: For an International Research Training Group, it is particularly relevant to discuss the collaborations of the partner institutions and of all participating researchers. Therefore, please summarise the measures and results of the collaboration with regard to the partner location. In doing so, you may include references to previous sections.

In particular, please detail the following:

- the extent to which the planned mutual research stays were implemented successfully, including any difficulties encountered and the strategies used to solve these difficulties;
- the extent to which the doctoral researchers and the participating researchers from the partner institution took part in the qualification programme and had an active role in shaping it;
- the additional scientific/academic and structural aspects that document the success of the international collaboration (for example, from the joint publications of the doctoral researchers listed in appendix 5 to this report and/or the joint publications of the participating researchers of both locations listed in the renewal proposal, holding joint conferences or offering joint degree programmes, initiating additional collaboration at the partner location outside of the Research Training Group where applicable, etc.);
- the solution found for the necessary complementary funding.

8. Appendices to the Report

The appendices to the report should only contain the items listed in the following sections. Please use the templates provided for all overviews and individual reports.

- **Appendix 1:**

A list of all doctoral researchers (including medical doctoral fellowship holders), postdoctoral researchers, qualifying fellows and student assistants (in the case of **IRTGs** from both the German and the partner institution) who have participated in the (International) Research Training Group to date.

If start-up funding for researchers who completed their doctorates within the RTG programme was used, please give detailed information on the number of persons who received such funding, for how long and in what form (position or fellowship and/or direct project costs) such funding was provided (Template 1f).

Please use the tables provided in Appendix 1 and provide all requested information. The information in the tables should be listed in chronological order, according to the date on which the person entered the Research Training Group. Please note that Template 1c applies to **IRTGs** only.

- **Appendix 2:**

In Appendix 2, please summarise in a table the duration of employment (or fellowship) contracts of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers who participated in the first funding period and were funded by the Research Training Group. For individuals with consecutive contracts, note the duration of each.

- **Appendix 3:**

Individual reports by all doctoral researchers (including medical doctoral fellowship holders) and postdoctoral researchers, independent of their funding arrangements, who participated in the Research Training Group during the first funding period. For **IRTGs**: We request that these reports also be provided for the partners.

Please categorise these reports into contributions from RTG-funded and associated doctoral researchers and RTG-funded and associated postdoctoral researchers, and sort them according to the date of admission into the RTG. The reports should, as a rule, be three pages in length and are not to exceed five pages. They should be structured according to the template provided in Appendix 3.

If applicable, the appendix should also include short individual reports by the RTG-funded qualifying fellows on their activities in the Research Training Group and the support they have received. The format of the individual reports can be based on the format specified for the individual reports by the doctoral researchers (cf. Template 3a), but can also be limited to the relevant information.

- **Appendix 4:**

Overviews of the participation of (post-)doctoral researchers in conferences and on research stays or internships at other institutions (such as other research institutes, cultural institutes or businesses, etc.) both at home and abroad (see Appendix 4). This information should be presented in a table.

For **IRTGs**: Additional overviews of research stays by (post-)doctoral researchers at their respective partner universities (see Appendix 4, Templates 4c and 4d). This information should also be presented in a table.

- **Appendix 5:**

A separate, complete list of all publications by doctoral and (where applicable) postdoctoral researchers (appendix 5.1) that have resulted within the framework of the Research Training Group. The names of the (post)doctoral researchers should be marked and the list, in the case of **IRTGs** at least for the German side, should be divided into two categories: (post-)doctoral researchers who received RTG funds and those funded by other sources.

For **IRTGs**: Please highlight joint publications by participants from the German and international partner institution(s).

When compiling and structuring the publications list, please adhere to the information on structuring the academic CVs of the participating researchers given in DFG form 54.07 "Proposal Preparation Instructions for Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups (Renewal Proposals)"; however, the maximum of 10 publications per category for each person does not apply here.

A list of the 10 most important publications of the Research Training Group as a whole may also be given (appendix 5.2). These may be the work of the participating researchers and/or the doctoral/postdoctoral members. This allows the RTG to document its joint research efforts in the first funding period.

- **Appendix 6:**

An example of the supervision agreement used by the Research Training Group to define the rights and obligations of both the Research Training Group and its participants must be attached.

- **Appendix 7:**

If replacement costs for one or more research sabbaticals for participating professors were financed by the Research Training Group during the first funding period, a report on the project and its results must be included here.

- **Appendix 8:**
If knowledge transfer projects were funded during the first funding period within the framework of the Research Training Group, please describe the progress and any results obtained.
- **Appendix 9:**
If temporary positions for substitute clinicians were financed by the Research Training Group during the first funding period, a report on the objectives, duration, progress and research findings of the substituted physician/licenced psychologist in the Research Training Group must be included here.
- **Appendix 10:**
If the spokesperson had gender inclusion funding available, indicate how these funds were used and describe what measures were implemented to facilitate this role.

C. Annex to the Instructions: Templates for the Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1: List of All Doctoral Researchers Funded by the Research Training Group to Date

Template 1a: Doctoral record of RTG doctoral researchers (including medical doctoral fellowship holders) (financed by the DFG through RTG funds - ordered by the time of joining the RTG)

	Name	Supervisors	Field of study; university and degree date (MA, diploma, etc.).	Start of doctoral training ¹	Funded member of RTG (from / to)	For ongoing doctoral studies: time to date (in months)	If appropriate: interruption in funding (in months) ²	After submission of thesis: time until submission (in months)	Time of oral examination	Grade	Occupation(s) following doctorate	Cf. individual report on page
1												
2												
3												
...												
...												

¹ Please provide the date on which the doctoral researcher considers that they began their doctoral research. This date may differ from the date of entry into the Research Training Group or from the date on which the researcher began receiving financial support from the RTG.

² Interruptions in funding due to maternity leave, parental leave, prolonged illness, etc.

Template 1b: Doctoral record of RTG doctoral researchers (including medical doctoral fellowship holders) (in Germany, funded by other sources)

	Name	Supervisors	Field of study; university and degree date (MA, diploma, etc.).	Start of doctoral training ³	Member of RTG (from / to)	For ongoing doctoral studies: time to date (in months)	If appropriate: interruption (in months) ⁴	After submission of thesis: time until submission (in months)	Time of oral examination	Grade	Occupation(s) following doctorate	Cf. individual report on page
1												
2												
3												
...												

Template 1c: **Only for IRTGs:** Doctoral record of doctoral researchers (including medical doctoral fellowship holders) at the partner institution

	Name	Supervisors	Field of study; university and degree date (MA, diploma, etc.).	Start of doctoral training ⁵	Member of RTG (from / to)	For ongoing doctoral studies: time to date (in months)	If appropriate: interruption (in months) ⁶	After submission of thesis: time until submission (in months)	Time of oral examination	Grade	Occupation(s) following doctorate	Cf. individual report on page
1												
2												
3												
...												

³ Please provide the date on which the doctoral researcher considers that they began their doctoral research. This date may differ from the date of entry into the Research Training Group or from the date on which the researcher began receiving financial support from the RTG.

⁴ Interruptions due to maternity leave, parental leave, prolonged illness, etc.

⁵ Please provide the date on which the doctoral researcher considers that they began their doctoral research. This date may differ from the date of entry into the Research Training Group or from the date on which the researcher began receiving financial support from the RTG.

⁶ Interruptions due to maternity leave, parental leave, prolonged illness, etc.

Appendix 2: Duration of Employment and Fellowship Contracts

Duration of contracts of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers
(financed by the DFG through RTG funds)

Contract duration	Number of contracts for		Number of contracts for		Total number of contracts
	Female doctoral researchers	Male doctoral researchers	Female postdoctoral researchers	Male postdoctoral researchers	
Up to 12 months					
Up to 24 months					
Up to 36 months					
Up to 48 months					
Exceeding 48 months					

Appendix 3: Template for Individual Reports

Appendix 3a: Template for Individual Reports by Doctoral Researchers (Including Medical Doctoral Fellowship Holders)

Project number:
First and last name of doctoral researcher:
(Working) title of doctoral project:
Name of supervisors:

1. General information:

Duration of Research Training Group membership: <i>Example: 1 October 2015 to 30 November 2018</i>
Funding (type and duration): ⁷ <i>Example: RTG position (1 October 2015 to 30 September 2018); research assistant at the Institute for Nuclear Physics (1 October to 30 November 2018)</i>
Start of doctoral training ⁸ and (expected) time of oral examination: ⁹
Commencement of studies; subject; university and date of degree (diploma, MA, etc.):
Where applicable, please note any circumstances which could have affected your scientific work ¹⁰ :
Occupation after leaving the RTG, if applicable:

2. Description of doctoral project and research results achieved to date:

The initial hypothesis and aims of the project, the current project status, a description of results achieved to date and, if applicable, information on the anticipated work schedule, networking with other RTG projects. For **IRTGs**: Integration of the stays abroad into the individual's own research work. Optional: references on the state of the art.¹¹

3. Comments on the qualification programme and supervision strategy:

To what extent were the courses helpful to you and your work? Was their scope appropriate? How were you involved in the design or organisation of the programme? What could still be improved/expanded upon? How was the supervision structured? For **IRTGs**: How would you rate your stays at the foreign partner university; what skills did you acquire there? Any other comments?

Participation in the following Research Training Group events:
Research stays or internships at other research institutions both at home and abroad. For IRTGs : stays at the partner university:
Participation in conferences, congresses, etc., at home and abroad:

4. Individual publications:¹²

⁷ If applicable: If the standard DFG funding period of 36 months has been extended through a decision by the Research Training Group, please describe the circumstances that led to this under 2 and/or 3.

⁸ Please provide the date on which you believe that the doctoral research began. This date may differ from the date of entry into the Research Training Group or from the date on which the researcher began receiving financial support from the RTG.

⁹ If the individual concerned has discontinued work on his/her thesis or has left the RTG, please note these circumstances and the reasons here.

¹⁰ See footnote 13 on the following page.

¹¹ See footnote 14 on the following page.

¹² See footnote 15 on the following page.

Appendix 3b: Template for Individual Reports by Postdoctoral Researchers

Project number:
First and last name of postdoctoral researcher:
(Working) title of postdoctoral project:

1. General information:

Duration of Research Training Group membership: <i>Example: 1 May 2015 to 30 November 2017</i>
Funding (type and duration): <i>Example: research assistant at the Institute for Nuclear Physics, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (1 May 2015 to 31 December 2015); Postdoctoral position in the RTG (1 January 2016 to 30 November 2017)</i>
Subject; institution; start date and completion of doctoral programme:
Commencement of studies; subject; university and date of degree (diploma, MA, etc.):
Any circumstances which may have affected your scientific work: ¹³
Occupation after leaving the RTG, if applicable:

2. **Description of individual research project and research results achieved to date:**
Initial hypothesis and aims of the project, current project status, description of results achieved to date, where applicable information on the anticipated work schedule, networking with other projects; optional: references on the state of the art.¹⁴

3. **Description of individual RTG-specific tasks**
E.g. in the qualification programme and supervision strategy

4. **Statement on career development measures**
E.g. qualification measures offered by the RTG or the university; integration in university personnel development strategies, etc.

Participation in or organisation of RTG-related events:
Research stays at other research institutions at home and abroad, for IRTGs also research stays at the partner university:
Participation in conferences, congresses, etc., at home and abroad:

5. Individual publications:¹⁵

¹³ To ensure that scientific achievements are appropriately assessed, it is recommended that you note any circumstances which may have affected your scientific work. Examples include childcare, long-term illnesses or disabilities.

¹⁴ The presentation of the project should be able to stand on its own and be understandable, coherent and assessable without the need to read additional documents. For a more comprehensive presentation of the current state of the art, additional papers (by the participating researchers and/or others) may be cited here. To the extent that these documents are non-published works by the participating researchers, they must be submitted in electronic form via the elan portal as a PDF file together with the renewal proposal. On the day of the on-site review, additional publications and manuscripts may be made available to the review panel. However, the review will be based only on the proposal itself; it is up to the reviewers' discretion whether they read any additional documents.

¹⁵ The format of the list of publications should follow the rules for academic CVs of participating researchers according to the "Proposal Preparation Instructions: Research Training Groups and International Research Training Groups (Renewal Proposals)" (DFG form 54.07). The limit of up to 10 listings per category for each person does not apply here.

