

Guidelines

on DFG Research Centres

I. Programme Objectives

DFG Research Centres enable German universities to establish internationally visible and competitive research facilities, thereby enhancing scientific networking and cooperation. A Research Centre should form an important part of a university's strategic and thematic planning, significantly raise its profile, and drive prioritisation. It should also create excellent training and career conditions for early-stage researchers and entail a high degree of interdisciplinary integration. Different from the Clusters of Excellence funded under the Excellence Initiative, calls for proposals of DFG Research Centres have specific topics and are thus part of an important research strategy programme of the DFG.

II. Funding and Proposals

1. Funding period

A Research Centre can receive DFG funding for up to twelve years. A review takes place every four years. Institutional funding by the DFG beyond twelve years is not possible.

2. Eligibility

Proposals may be submitted by research universities wanting to host a DFG Research Centre in order to establish a strong priority on the basis of existing structures. This entails

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substantial cost-sharing: infrastructure, personnel costs, and hiring commitments for professors initially funded by the DFG will be considered in the grant decision, as will any private funds the university can raise for a Research Centre.

3. Participants and collaboration

DFG Research Centres are encouraged to include suitable non-university institutions. They may cooperate with non-university research institutions as well as with private sector partners, museums, libraries, schools, government agencies, etc. Furthermore, universities and institutions in other countries may also participate in a DFG Research Centre.

For guidelines on the financial participation of partner institutions, consult the publication *Verwendungsrichtlinien Exzellenzeinrichtungen* (www.dfg.de/exin/exc/formulare/ >> DFG/WR form ExIn10, in German). In case of a cooperation agreement with a private sector partner, contractual provisions should follow the DFG model agreement (www.dfg.de/formulare/ >> DFG form 41.026e).

4. Type of funding

As part of a DFG Research Centre, funding for professorships and junior research groups (both including staff and facilities) may be requested to strengthen an existing priority, assuming the university is prepared to continue these positions as an important element of core support after DFG funding terminates. Additional project funding for staff, direct costs and investments as well as flexible project funding may also be proposed. Resources for staff and direct costs can also be requested to fund efficient management, including professional staff recruitment, gender equality or dual career measures, as well as public relations activities by the DFG Research Centre. For guidelines, see the publication *Verwendungsrichtlinien Exzellenzeinrichtungen* (www.dfg.de/exin/exc/formulare/ >> DFG/WR form ExIn10, in German). For the allocation of funds within a DFG Research Centre, a transparent, quality-oriented procedure should be established. This should be explained in the proposal and set forth in the statutes.

Professorships may be proposed as W1-scale assistant professorships; for early reappointments as W2/W3-scale professorships; or for additional professors as W2/W3-scale professorships. For professorships initially underwritten by project funds, post-programme plans must be documented.

III. Requirements for Draft Proposals and Full Proposals

1. Draft proposals and full proposals must describe the university's research priorities, also in terms of its general strategy.
2. DFG Research Centres are expected to include features to promote early-career researchers (structured doctoral training, early independence).
3. The design of the Research Centre must promote gender equality in research and academia.
4. The DFG Research Centre should be presented as a framework for collaboration between participating working groups on the announced topic. The research programme should be competitive at the international level and be characterised by originality and risk-taking. Furthermore, the proposal must describe the Research Centre's long-term goal and its developmental outlook. It must be ensured that the structural impact of a Research Centre is more significant than that of a Collaborative Research Centre.
5. It is recommended that full proposals include a draft of the statutes. The model statutes for Clusters of Excellence may serve as a guideline (www.dfg.de/exin/exc/formulare/ >> DFG/WR form ExIn20, in German).

IV. Proposal and Decision Process

Establishment and renewal proposals will be reviewed by an international panel on the basis of the proposal and only according to scientific criteria. Review criteria are based on the call for proposals and on the Review Criteria for Clusters of Excellence (www.dfg.de/exin/exc/formulare/ >> DFG/WR form ExIn303.e). Funding decisions are made by the DFG Joint Committee based on recommendations by the DFG Senate.

DFG Research Centres that are not approved to continue may receive degressive completion funding for up to two years. Completion funding will be awarded by the DFG Joint Committee based on recommendations by the DFG Senate.

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