



The Walter Benjamin Programme

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Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V.

Independent association
under private law

**Researchers have
the majority**
in decision-making
committees

DFG Members

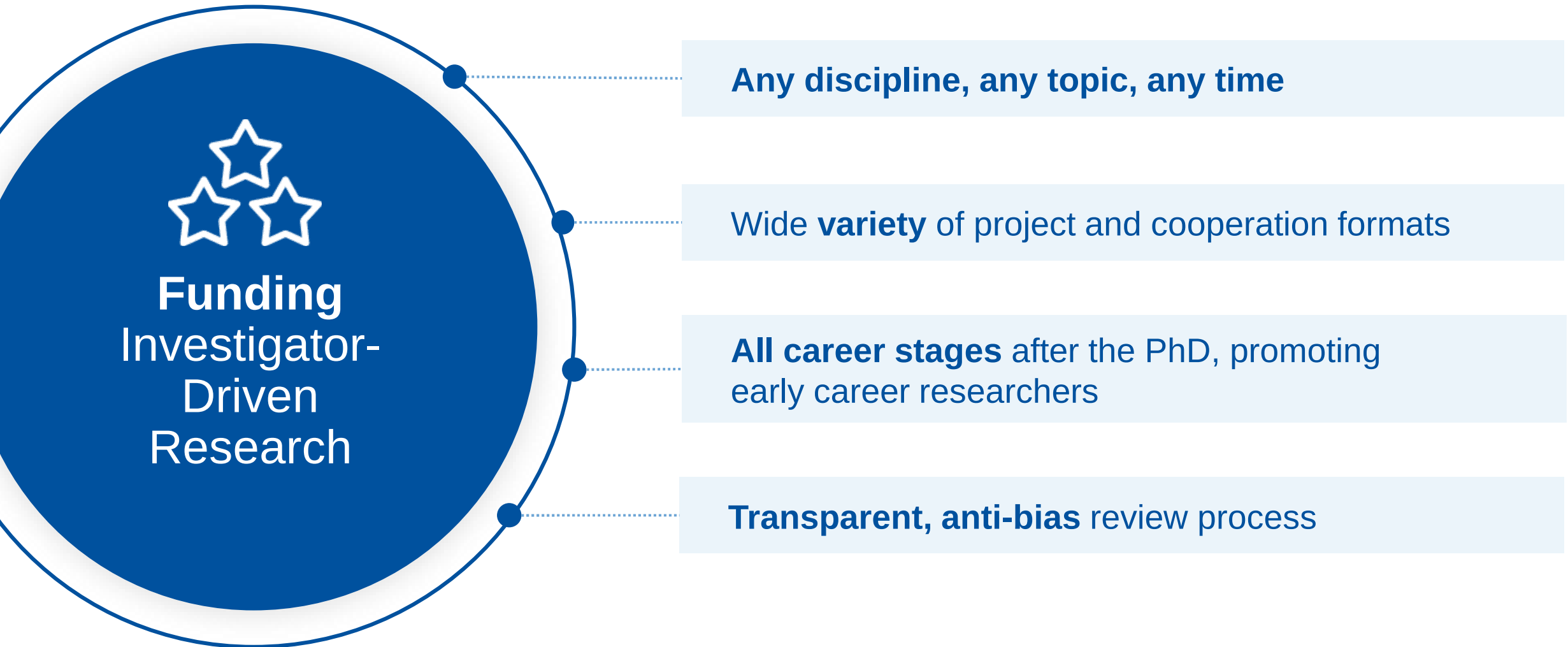
are 99 leading universities,
non-university research
institutions, scientific
associations and
academies



Funding
knowledge-driven
research



**Germany's largest
independent research
funding organisation**
3.9 € billion budget (2024)



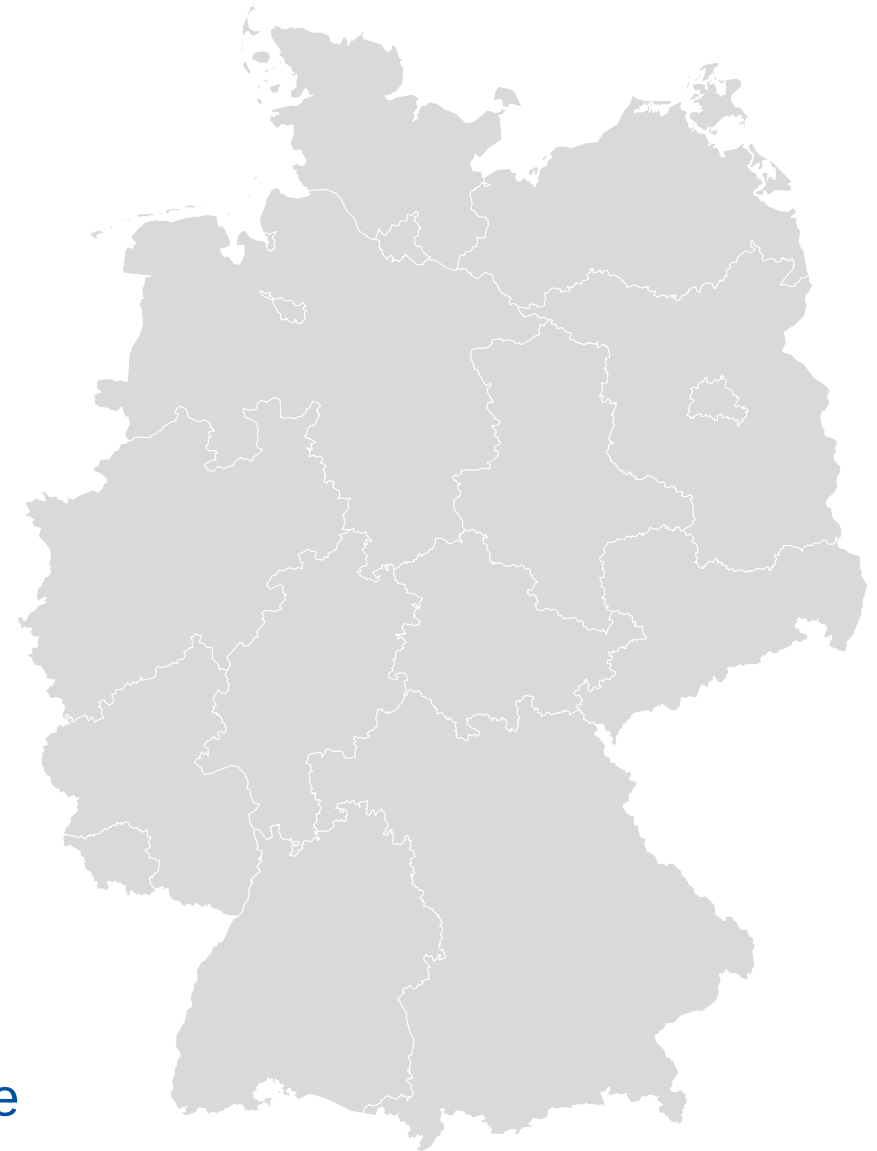
Who is eligible to apply for DFG funding?

Researchers

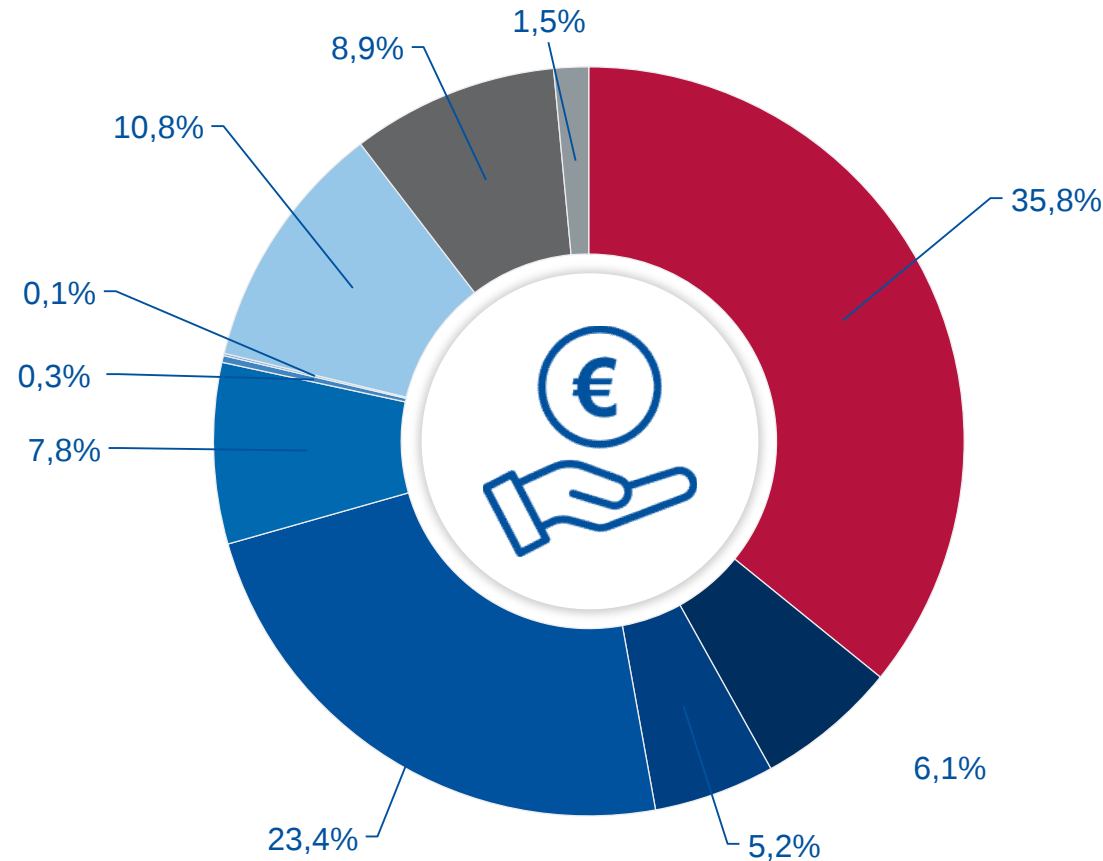
...who have completed their scientific training,
i.e. **who hold a doctorate***

...who (would like to) work
in Germany

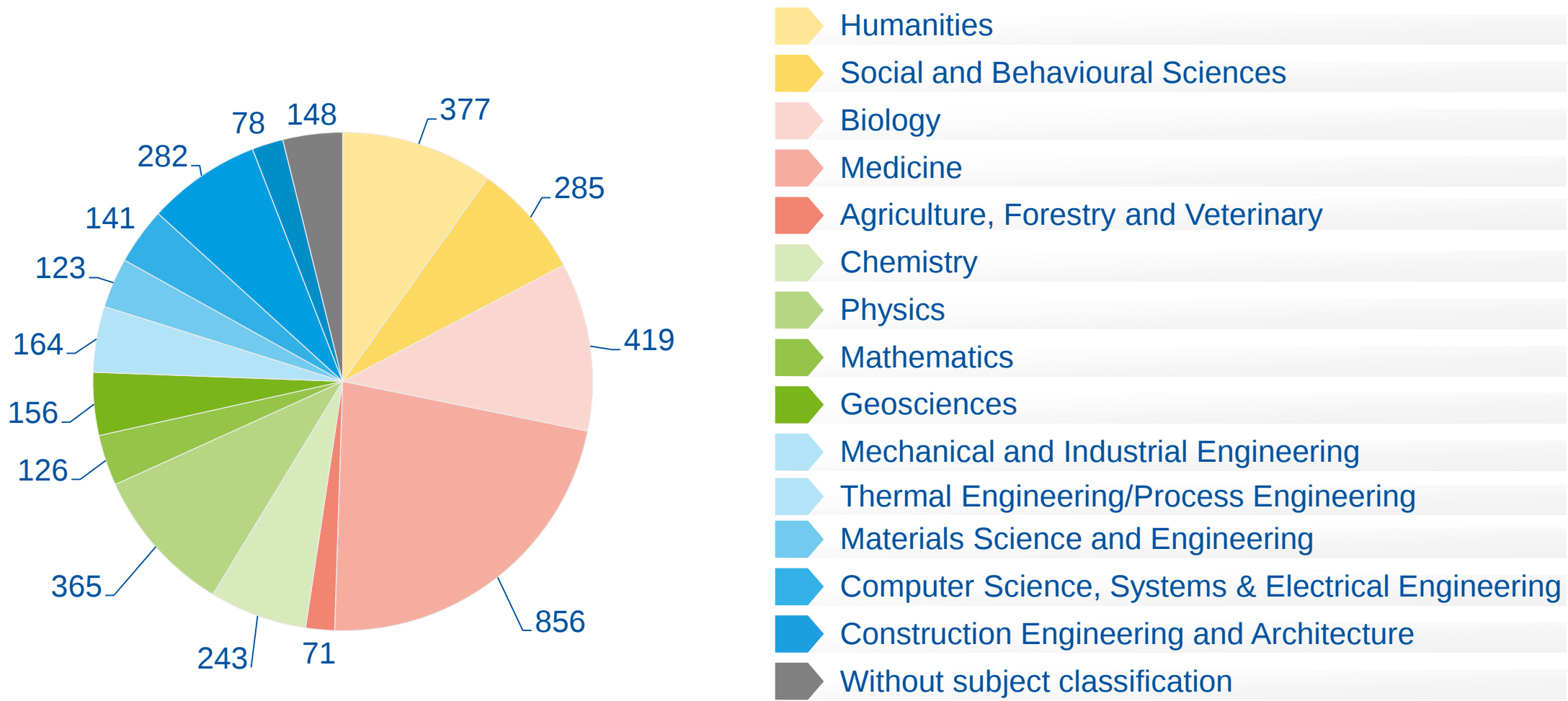
*earliest date: upon submission to the examination office



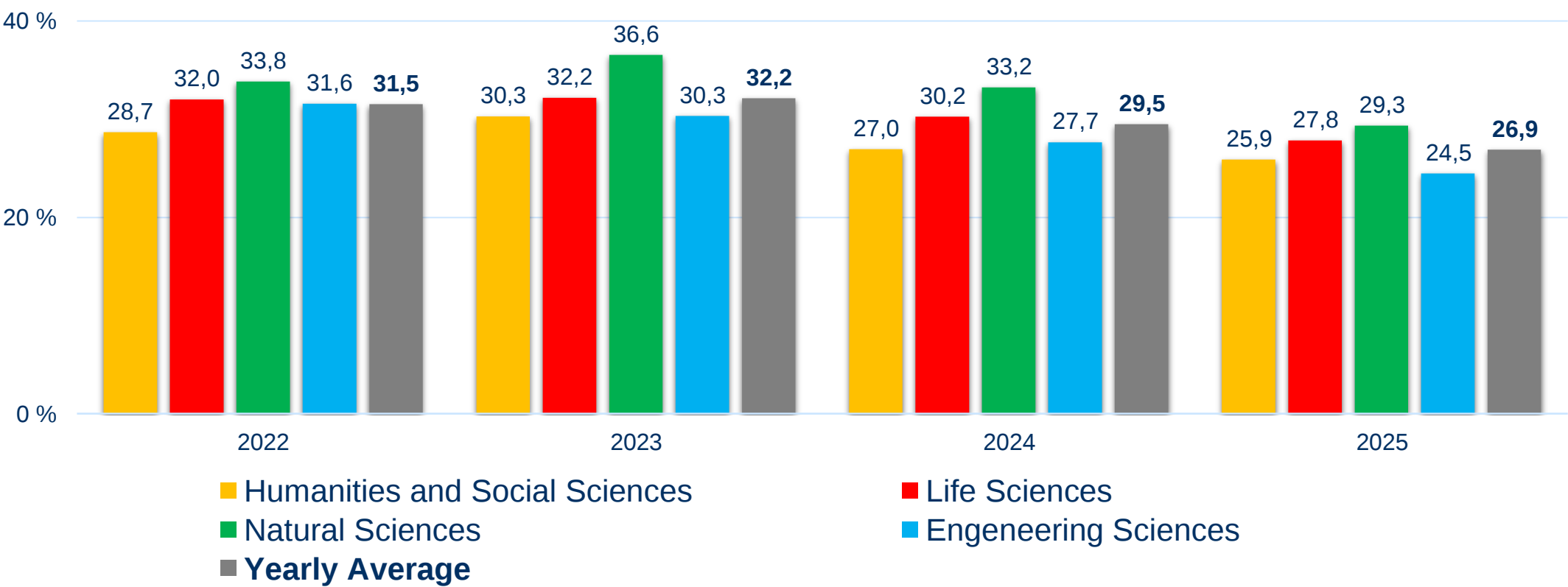
2025 (in Mio. € und %)



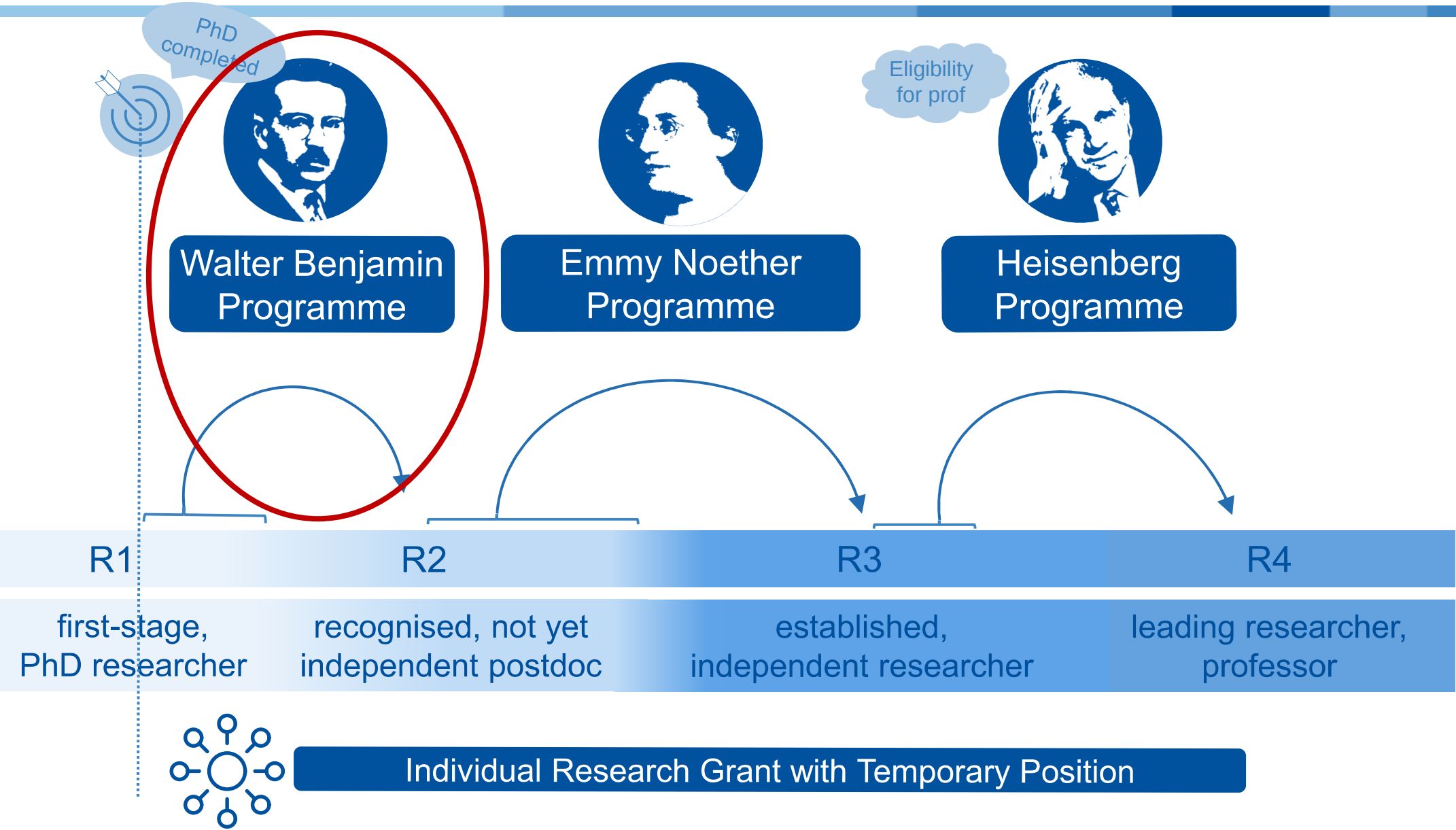
- Individual Grants: 1.373,0 Mio. €
- Research Units: 235,0 Mio. €
- Priority Programmes: 200,9 Mio. €
- Collaborative Research Centers: 897,1 Mio. €
- Research Training Groups: 298,2 Mio. €
- Research Impulses: 12,9 Mio. €
- DFG Research Centers: 5,0 Mio. €
- Excellence Strategy: 413,3 Mio. €
- Infrastructure funds: 342,9 Mio. €
- Prizes, Other: 57,7 Mio. €



By scientific discipline 2022 to 2025 (in %)



* The funding rate (or success rate) was calculated by dividing the number of awards by the number of proposals reviewed.
Source: New Individual grants





The Walter Benjamin Programme



Overview

1. Key points of the programme
2. Target group and eligibility
3. Mobility
4. Scope of funding
5. Walter Benjamin Position vs. Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators
6. Application process
7. Figures
8. FAQ

Autonomy

Conduct your (first)
own research
project



Mobility

Move to a new
research institution



Career support
through mentored
research



Funding in **Germany**
or **abroad**
or **both**





Own Project

First own, defined research project; scientific support

Step towards more scientific responsibility and independence



Career Development

Own career planning is part of the application

The scientific potential for further career steps is an evaluation criterion



Research Institution

Non-profit research institution that allows publication of the results

Suitability for the project is a factor in the review process



Walter Benjamin Position

Postdoctoral Position at a German Research Institution

Walter Benjamin Fellowship

Fellowship at a research institution abroad

Walter Benjamin Rotation Position

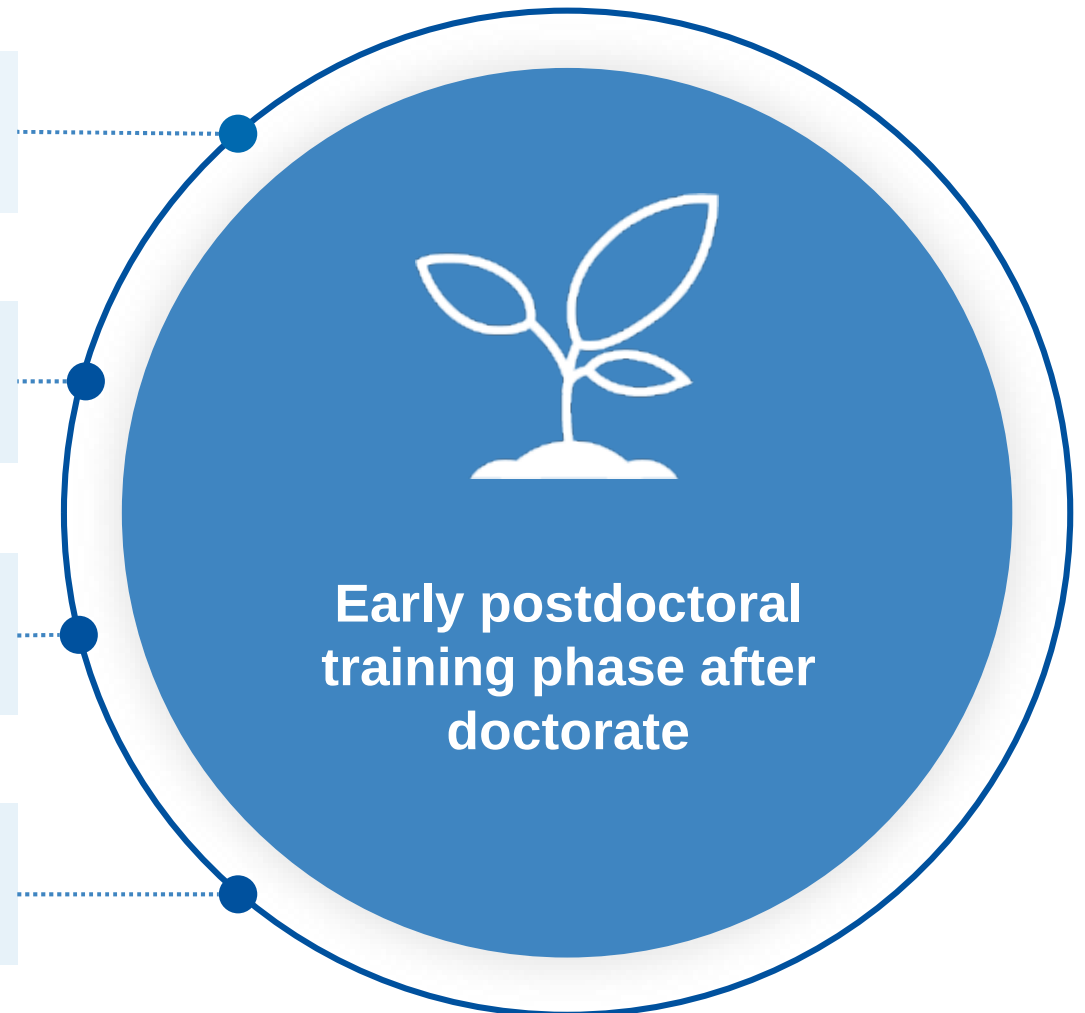
Funding for clinical researchers who wish to take a leave of absence to conduct research

No deadline x-years after doctorate

Scientific support by an experienced researcher & development measures needed

EU definition R2 „Recognised Researcher“

No indicators of former independent project experience





Irrelevant:



Nationality



Current employment status
(exceptions for the fellowship)



Current commercial employment
(exceptions for the fellowship)



Earliest date to submit proposal

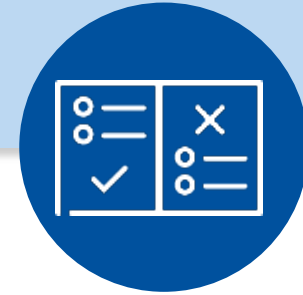
As soon as the dissertation is submitted
to the responsible examination office



Dissertation

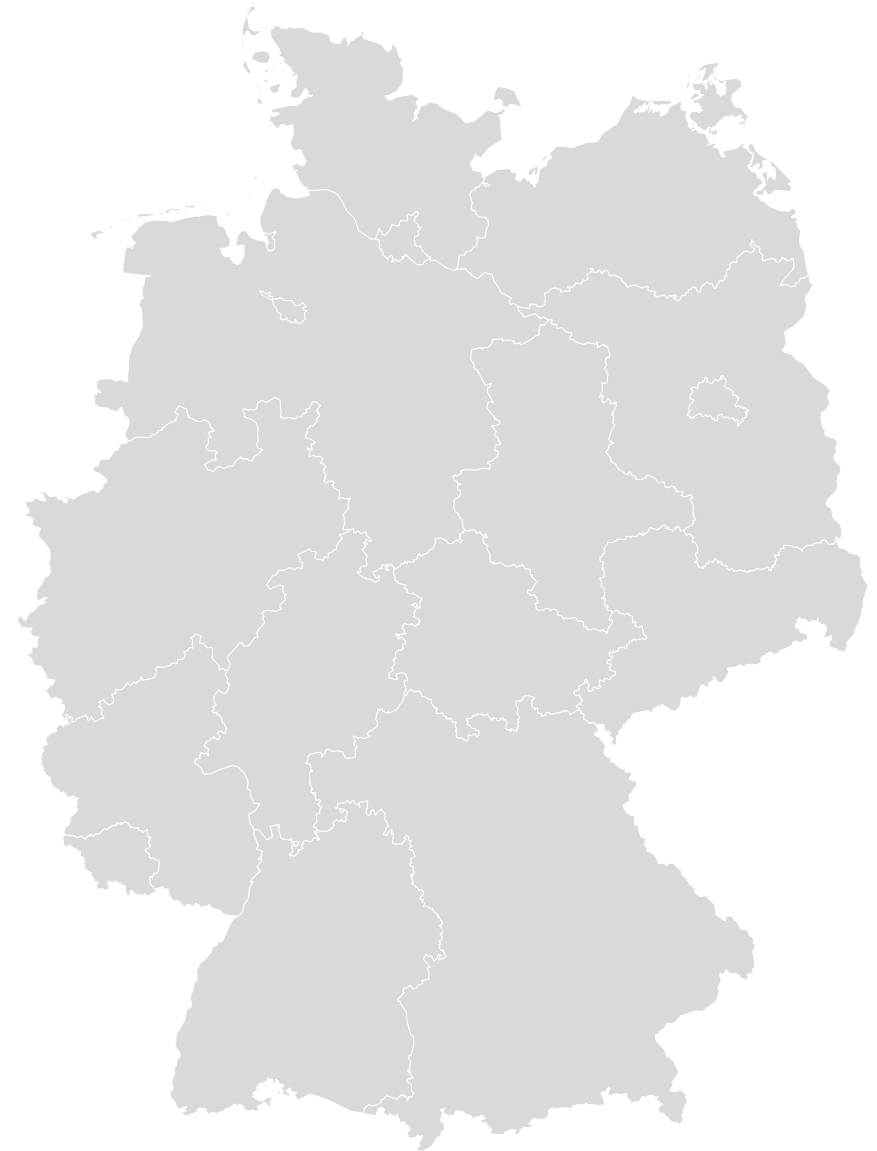


Confirmation of submission to
the relevant examination
office



Statement from the doctoral
advisor regarding the
prospects for success

- No further personal requirements other than the early postdoc phase
- Previous affiliation to Germany's academic research system is not relevant



Affiliation to Germany's academic research system is assumed

You **EITHER** have completed the majority of your schooling and university education in Germany

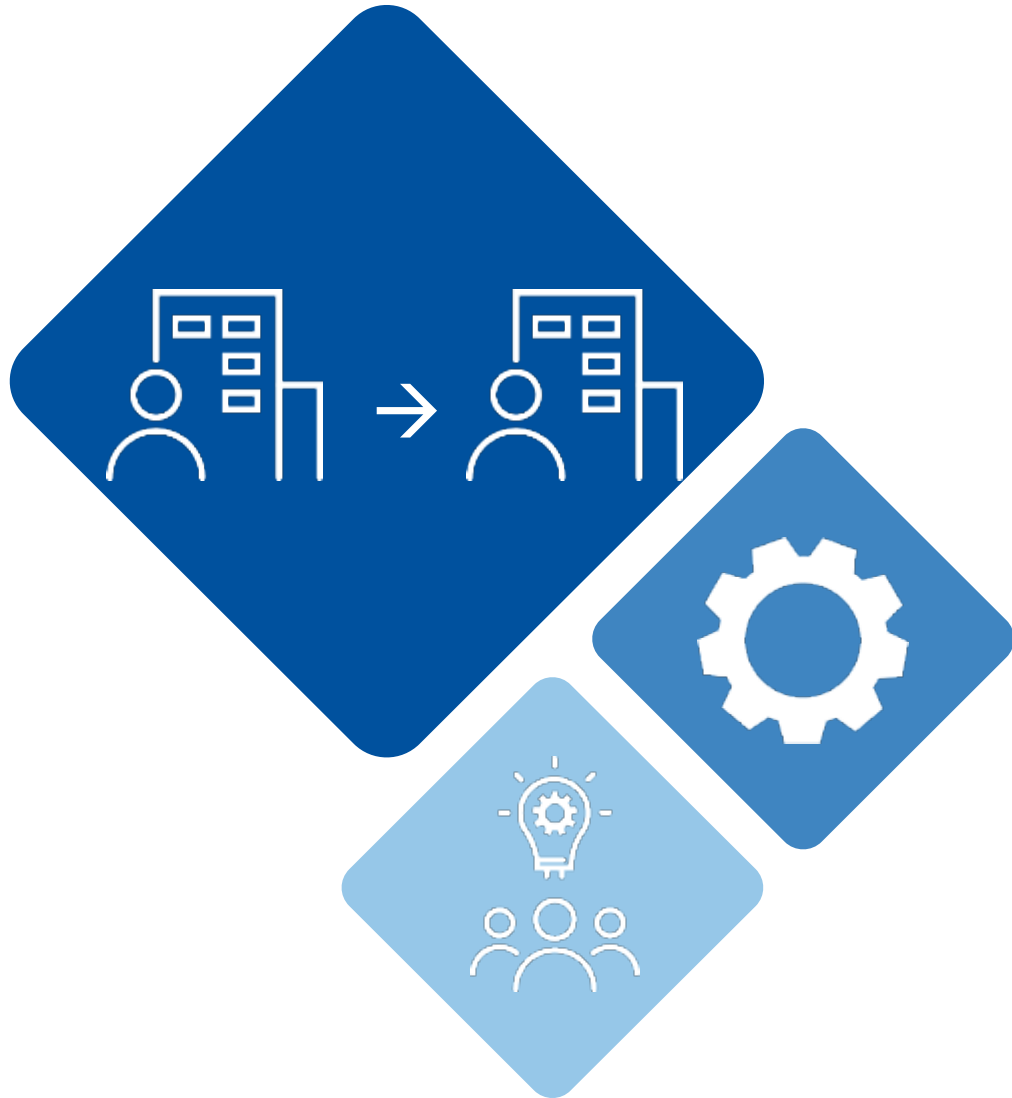
- AND have not spent more than 3 years abroad for research purposes since completing your doctorate
- AND at the time of application, you have not yet worked for more than one year at the host institution



OR you have completed the majority of your schooling and university education abroad

- AND at the time of application, you have been working in Germany scientifically and continuously for at least the last three years.

In this case, the application must be submitted while still living and working scientifically in Germany.



As a rule, a change of institution is required

Criterion of mobility applies consistently for the entire funding period

Supporting person should not be the doctorate supervisor

Exeptions (Walter Benjamin Position only)

- Family reasons (local childcare, caring for close relatives, etc.)
- Own health condition (need for on-site medical care, etc.)
- Highly specialized project, which can only be carried out at the current/former institution

→ Required in the application: Justification of a thematic mobility & justification of exceptional case

Position in Germany

- E13 TVöD/TV-L (or position for temporary substitutes for clinicians)
- + allowance for direct project costs: € 250/month
- You are employed by your host institution

Fellowship abroad

- 2.188€/month
- + allowance for direct project costs: € 313/month
- + foreign allowance
- + cost of living allowance
- + child allowance (if applicable)
- + possibility of 6-months return grant
- Use the award calculator on the DFG website

→ Host institution needs to provide all additional project costs

- Funding can be taken up as part-time funding **solely for family reasons** (childcare, caring for close relatives, own disability or chronic illness). No other reasons are recognised.
- In the case of part-time uptake, the scope of the **position or fellowship** may not be below 50%.
- The **position** can be reduced to less than 50% only in connection with parental leave – the position may not be less than 20%.
- All available working hours must be devoted to the project. No other occupations alongside the part-time funding are possible.

→ The DFG must be notified in advance of the part-time nature of the position. The duration of the grant is extended accordingly.

Child Allowance

- € 400 per month for the first child
- € 100 per month for each additional child



Childcare

- Extention by max. 12 months
- OR
- Reimbursement of childcare costs (up to $12 \times € 2188 = \text{max. } € 26.256$)
- OR
- A combination of extension and reimbursement of childcare costs

The Walter Benjamin Position and the Module Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators in the Programme Individual Research Grants differ in their **funding goals**, **requirements** and **eligibility criteria**

- The **Walter Benjamin Programme** aims to fund the **academic career of the applicant**. A stay at a host institution in an **early career phase** is funded. The subject of the peer review is therefore also the **career potential** of the applicant. The project is scientifically accompanied by an experienced person.
- The **Individual Research Grant** (incl. the module **Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators**), aims to fund an independent **project**; the **quality of the project** is the focus of the evaluation, but not the career development of the project leader.
- Parallel applications are not possible.

Temporary Positions for
Principle Investigators
(Individual Research Grant)

Walter Benjamin Position

Commonalities

Enables the realisation of research projects in Germany that are limited in time and topic

Differences

Focus on project

All career phases after the doctorate

Independent project management

Mobility not condition for eligibility

Funding period generally 3 years
(extension option)

Possibility of a stay abroad for one third
of the funding period

Focus on applicant

Exclusively early career phase after doctorate

Mentored research

Mobility required

Funding period max. 2 years (extension only in very
exceptional cases)

Stays abroad are possible for up to a total of 3 months



Do I belong to the target group? → early postdoctoral phase; in doubt contact the responsible DFG programme contact for your field of science

Candidates who want to apply for the fellowship and only partly completed their schooling and university education in Germany → check your eligibility

Where is the perfect institution? Who is the perfect host researcher? → subject of the review process

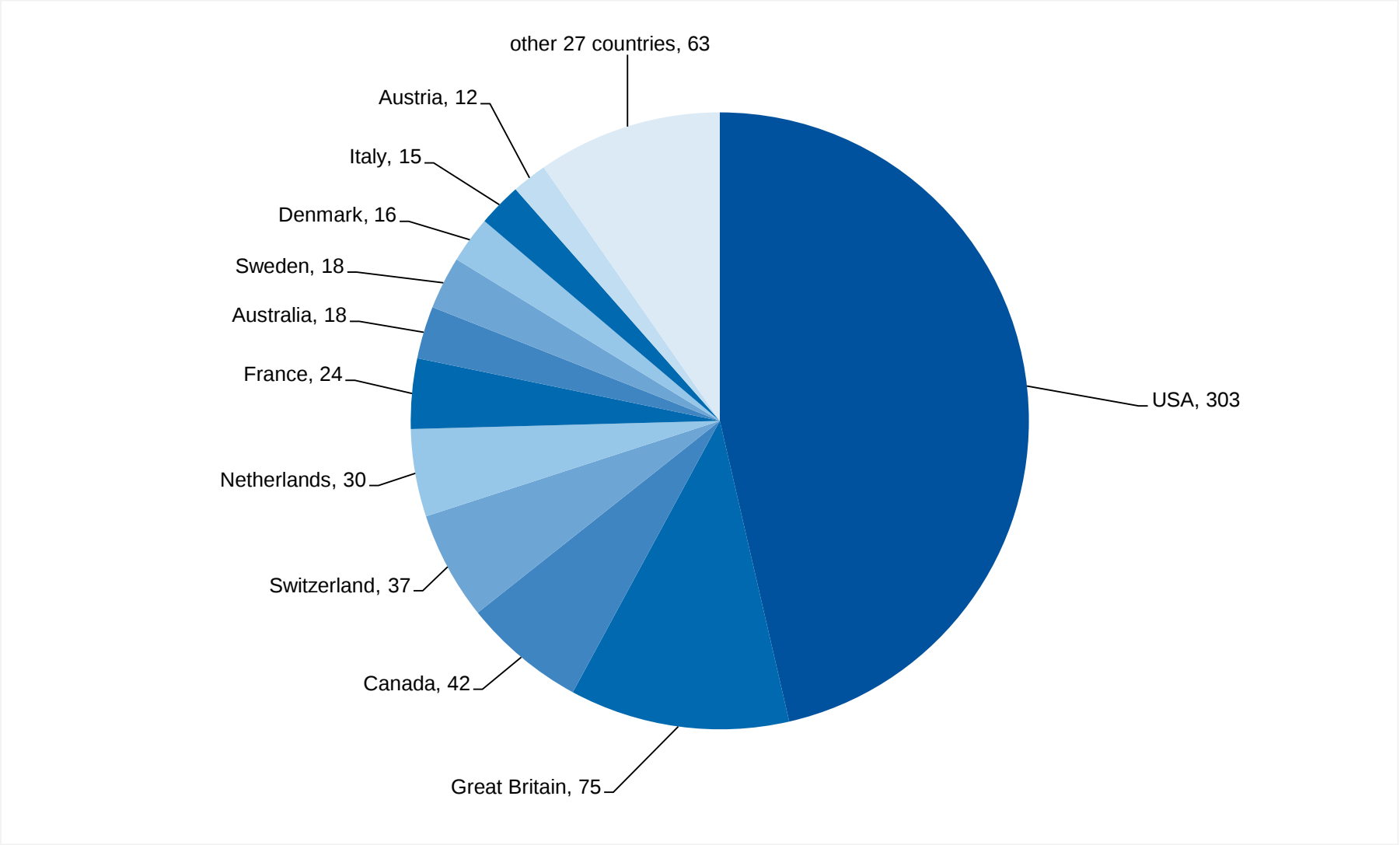
What funds do I need? Can I get by with the lump-sum research funds? Can the host institution provide all the additional funds needed?

What does the supporting person do? → negotiate which concrete measures; attach a written “host confirmation” (abroad) or “statement” (in Germany)

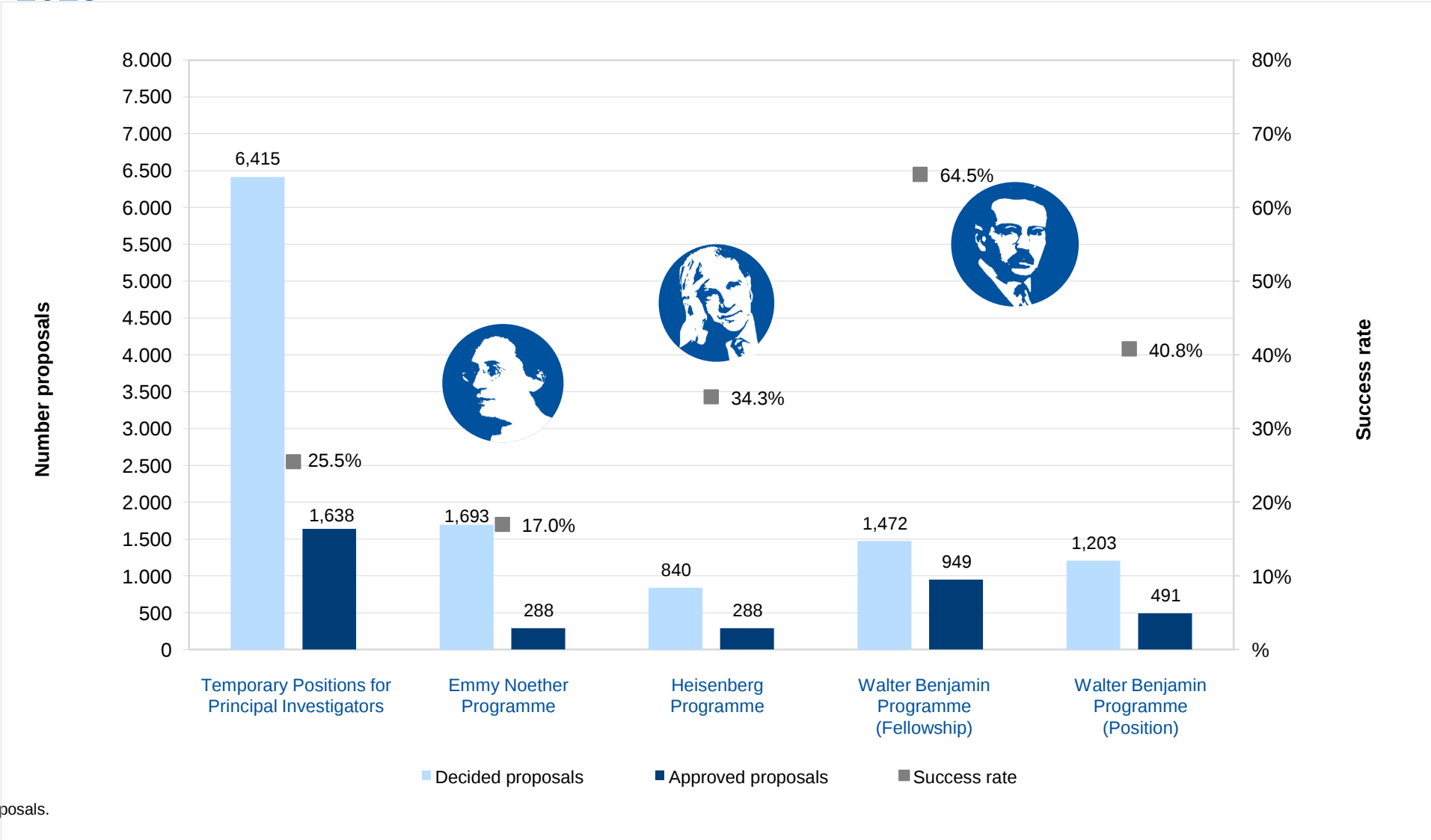




Destinations for Research Visits Abroad 2025



Numbers of proposals and success rates* in programmes promoting Early Career Researchers 2022 to 2025



* Based: New proposals.

- **Do I need to change institutions?**

Yes, if you have worked more than one year at the host institution (fellowship).

Yes, if there is no special justification to stay (position).



- **Am I in the early postdoc career phase?**

If you have already independently led a research project or managed staff, or if you are fully capable of doing so and no longer require mentoring in your research (=R3), you are no longer eligible to apply. If in doubt, consult the DFG contact persons responsible for your subject area.

- **How long does it take to receive a decision?**

6-7 months on average.

- **Which subject area should I submit my application to if I want to carry out an interdisciplinary project?**

Submit your application to the office that you believe covers the largest part of your project.



From Submission to Decision



Tips

- Necessary info can be found on the DFG website
- Carefully read and follow the guidelines and proposal instructions
- Decide on the proposal **language**: English or German
- Start with **smaller** projects
- Put yourself in the **reviewers' shoes**
 - Consult the ["General Guidelines for the Written Review"](#) for reviewers
 - Write the proposal in a self-explanatory manner
- Seek **honest criticism** from colleagues
- Plan on a **feasible timeline**
- **Communicate openly with the DFG Head Office**, i.e. if a conflict of interest or competitive scenario exists

Doubts about the scientific contribution

Open questions regarding the work plan

Main aspects of research question already answered

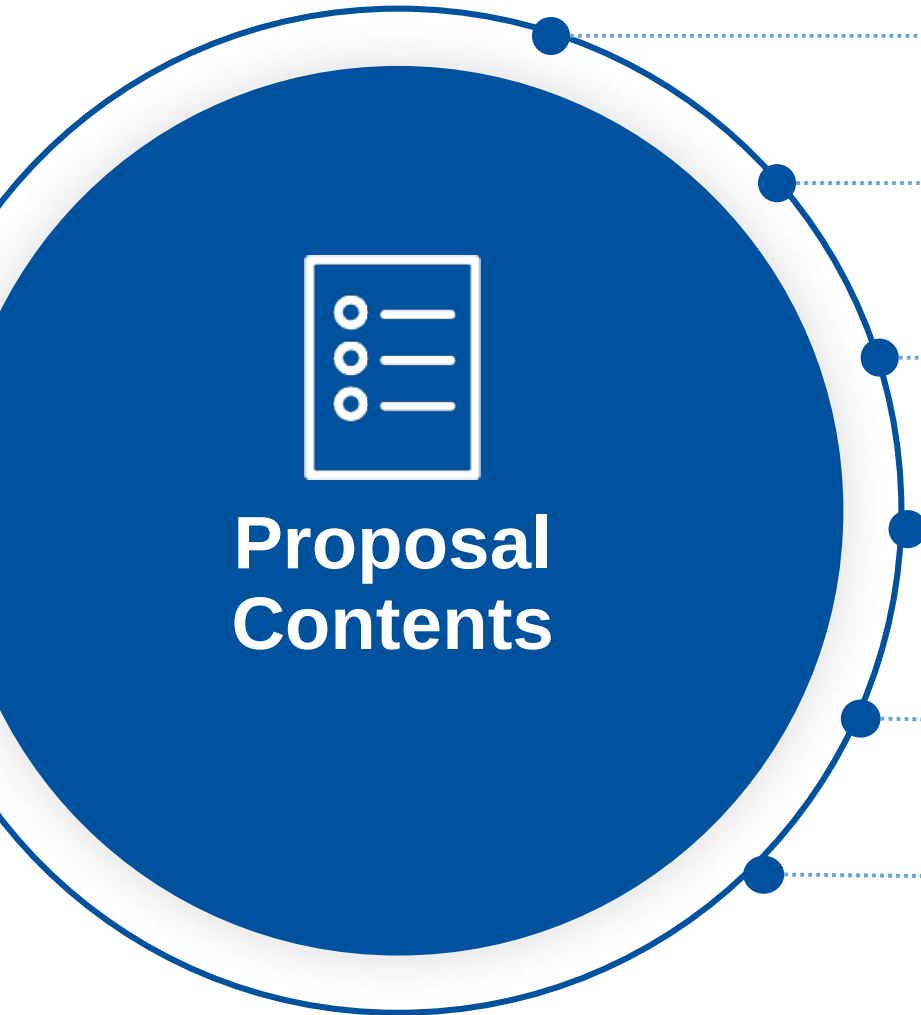
Concerns regarding the feasibility of the planned project

Doubts about the applicant's expertise



Doubts about the suitability of the research methods to achieve the project goals





What is the knowledge gap you would like to fill?

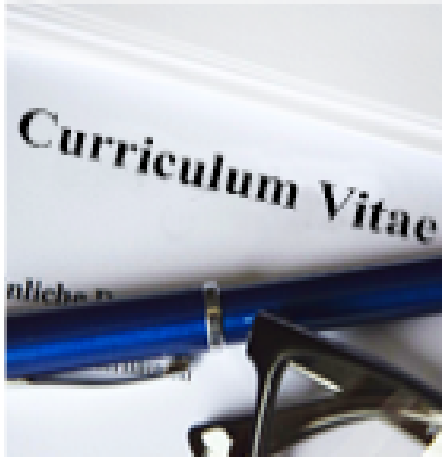
Why are the expected results novel and relevant?

What's your concrete, realistic and feasible plan to answer your research questions?

How are you going to manage setbacks / what's your plan b?

Why are you the right person to successfully run this project?

Why is the host institution ideal for your project?



Use the DFG CV template

www.dfg.de/formulare/53_200_elan/53_200_en_elan.rtf



Mention time away from research

Include prizes, fellowships and awards



List up to ten peer-reviewed publications



Include further publications, results, activities within and outside the research system

Questions? Ask for help



On Eligibility

procedures-researchcareers@dfg.de

On General Topics

info-researchcareers@dfg.de

On Equity & Diversity

chancengleichheit@dfg.de

With a Subject-Specific Focus

<https://www.dfg.de/en/about-us/head-office/programme-contacts>

Submitting your proposal via *elan*

Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

Anmeldung / Login

E-Mail Adresse /
Email address:

Kennwort /
Password:

Sprache wählen /
Select language:

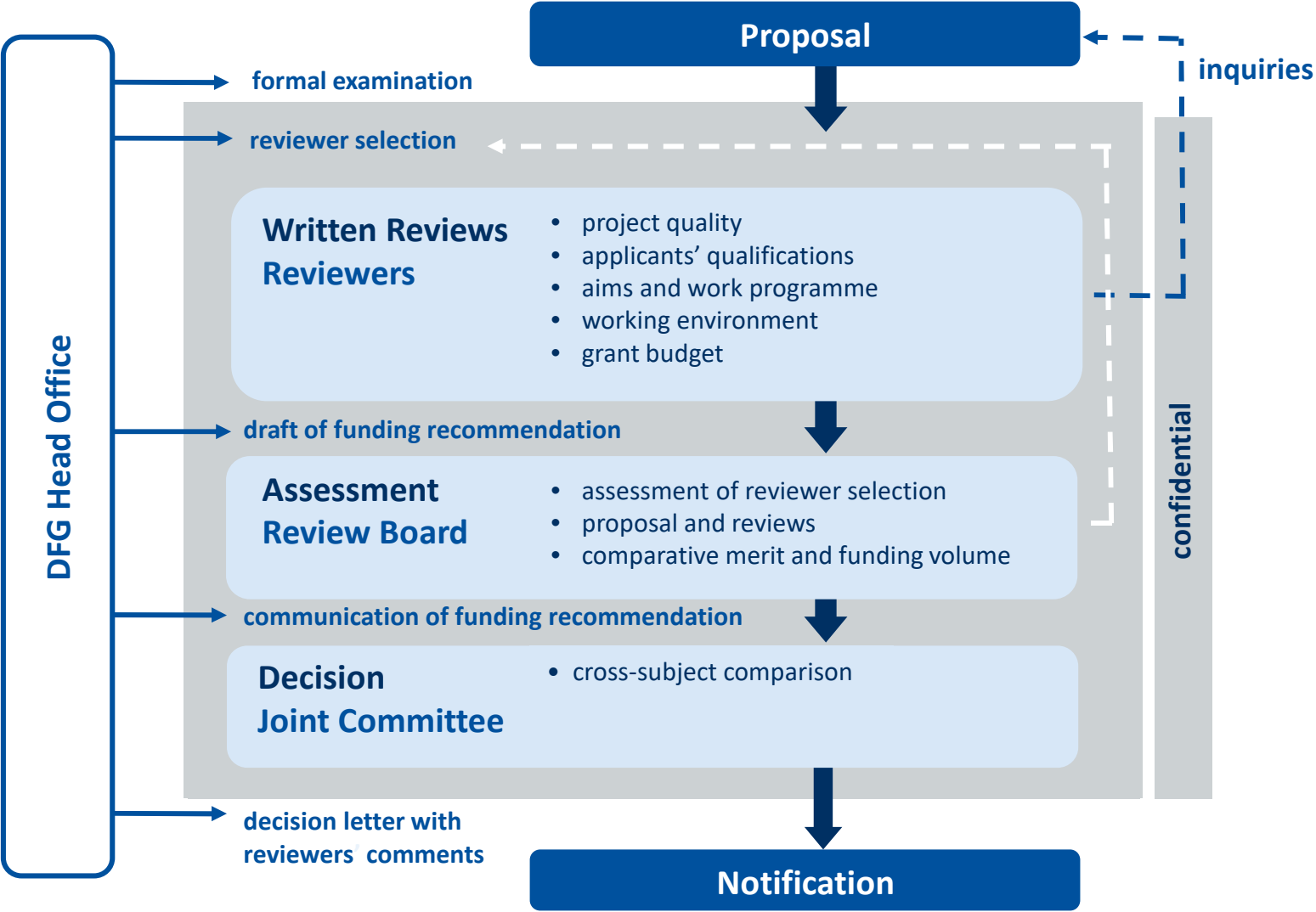
Deutsch

English

E-Mail Adresse speichern /
Save email address:

☐

Anmelden / Login





Emmy Noether Programme:
www.dfg.de/emmy_noether/en

Orientation for early-career researchers:
www.dfg.de/research_careers

Proposal Submission – A How-To Guide:
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes

GEPRIS – database with all DFG-funded projects:
gepris.dfg.de/en

Profiles of 25,000 German research institutes:
www.gerit.org

DFG Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft



www.dfg.de



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