Funding Opportunities of the DFG for Early Career Scientists

Anjana Buckow | IAP and Universität Rostock | 13 June 2019
Topics

1 | The DFG – About Us

2 | DFG Funding Opportunities

3 | Proposal and Review Process

4 | Advice for Applicants

5 | Links and Resources
The DFG

► serves all branches of science and the humanities
► fosters scientific excellence through competition
► supports international cooperation in research
► advises political and social decision-makers
► supports the transfer of knowledge between science and industry

Funding in 2017, by scientific discipline

- Engineering Sciences €623.9 million (19.8%)
- Interdisciplinary €223.7 Mio. € (7.1%)
- Humanities and Social Sciences €480.4 million (15.2%)
- Life Sciences €1,110.9 million (35.2%)
- Natural Sciences €714.1 million (22.6%)
In 2018, the DFG funded almost 33,000 projects:

- Individual research projects
- Research collaborations
- Research infrastructure
- Coordinated programmes
Programmes funded in 2018

Research funding for new and ongoing projects by programme for calendar year 2018 (in €m and %)

- Individual grants programme: 1,180.1 (34.7%)
- Excellence Initiative: 566.2 (16.6%)
- Research Units: 157.5 (4.6%)
- Collaborative Research Centres: 760.1 (22.3%)
- Research Training Groups: 214.3 (6.3%)
- Priority Programmes: 229.0 (6.7%)
- Research Centres: 33.1 (1.0%)
- Infrastructure funding: 207.6 (6.1%)
- Prizes, other: 57.3 (1.7%)
Amount of research funding awarded by scientific discipline for each calendar year 2015 to 2018 (in €m and %)
1 | The DFG – About Us

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3 | Proposal and Review Process

4 | Useful Advice for Applicants

5 | Links and Resources
Researchers

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

► who would like to work in Germany

► of any age
DFG Funding Opportunities
Funding principles

► Research topic: open, bottom-up
► Type of research: basic research in any field of science and the humanities
► Note: individual career phases and family-related career breaks are considered
► Deadlines: none*

* Exceptions: Priority Programmes, international activities, workshops for early career investigators

13/06/2019 DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Scientists
DFG Funding Opportunities
For early career researchers

BA/MA → Doctorate → Postdoc period → Achieving eligibility for tenure → Preparing for a scientific mgmt. position → Professorship or other scientific mgmt. position

Student assistant in an RTG/GSC → Position or fellowship in an RTG/GSC → Research fellowship abroad → Emmy Noether Programme

Student assistant in a DFG project → Position in a DFG project → Position in a DFG project → Heisenberg Programme

Temp. principal investigator position → Temp. principal investigator position → Temp. principal investigator position → Professorship in a (Clinical) Research Unit

Research fellowship abroad → Research fellowship abroad → Research fellowship abroad
## DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers

### Career Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BA/MA</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
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### Positions

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DFG Funding Opportunities
For early career researchers

- BA/MA
- Doctorate
- Postdoc period
- Achieving eligibility for tenure
- Preparing for a scientific mgmt. position
- Professorship or other scientific mgmt. position

- Emmy Noether Programme
- Heisenberg Programme
- Professorship in a (Clinical) Research Unit

- Temp. principal investigator position
- Temp. principal investigator position
- Temp. principal investigator position

- Research fellowship abroad
- Research fellowship abroad
- Research fellowship abroad

- Position in a DFG project
- Position in a DFG project
- Position in a DFG project

- Student assistant in an RTG/GSC
- Position or fellowship in an RTG/GSC
- Student assistant in a DFG project
- Position in a DFG project
DFG Funding Opportunities
Working in a DFG-funded project

- Positions for **doctoral researchers** and **postdocs**
- At a German university or research institute
- **Duration** of funding depends on project
- **Position** (E13-E14 TvöD/TV-L)
- **Apply with the project’s PI**
DFG Funding Opportunities
For early career researchers

- BA/MA
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- Temp. principal investigator position
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- Research fellowship abroad
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- Position in a DFG project
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- Position in a DFG project
DFG Funding Opportunities
Research fellowships (Forschungsstipendien)

► Fellowships for **postdoctoral** researchers for a research project **abroad**

► Duration of max. 2 years

► Possibility of max. 6-months return grant

► Basic fellowship allowance = €1,750
  + direct project costs
  + foreign allowance
  + cost of living allowance
  + child allowance (where applicable)
  + travel allowance

→ **award calculator** at DFG website

► **Proposal to the DFG**

DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Scientists
Benefits for fellows with children:

► €400 child allowance for the first child
  + €100 for each additional child

► The fellowship can be extended by max. 12 months
  or costs for childcare can be reimbursed
  
  ● Up to 12 x €1,750 = max. €21,000
  ● Childcare costs must be verified by presenting invoices and payment receipts

► Extension and reimbursement of childcare costs can be combined
Number of new research fellowships* by scientific discipline 2018

- **Life Sciences**: 185 (57.6%)
- **Humanities and Social Sciences**: 36 (11.2%)
- **Engineering Sciences**: 17 (5.3%)
- **Natural Sciences**: 83 (25.9%)

Total number of fellowships: 321

*not including return grants*
DFG Funding Opportunities
Research fellowships (Forschungsstipendien)

Funding rates for research fellowships (not including return grants)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Humanities and Social Sciences</th>
<th>Life Sciences</th>
<th>Natural Sciences</th>
<th>Engineering Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
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Research fellowships – destinations for research visits 2018

- USA, 499
- Great Britain, 125
- Canada, 47
- Switzerland, 40
- Australia, 38
- Netherlands, 38
- Sweden, 31
- France, 30
- Spain, 20
- Denmark, 18
- other countries, 76

* Based on ongoing research fellowships in 2018, not including return grants.
** Recipients of research fellowships can undertake more than one research visit.

DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Scientists
13/06/2019
**DFG Funding Opportunities**

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DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Scientists

13/06/2019
DFG Funding Opportunities
Temporary position for principal investigators (Eigene Stelle)

- Individual Grants offer an opportunity to pursue research project in Germany
- Allows flexibility
- Funding for staff, consumables, travel, instrumentation, publication funding etc.
- Additional module: Temporary position for principal investigator
DFG Funding Opportunities
Temporary position for principal investigators (*Eigene Stelle*)

- For *postdoctoral* researchers
- Research in *Germany* → the host institution becomes the employer
- **Duration** of generally up to 3 years
- **Position** (E13 to E14 TVöD/TV-L) + project funds
- **Proposal to the DFG**
New awards in the temporary positions for principal investigators* scheme by scientific discipline 2015 to 2018

2015: 183 Humanities and Social Sciences, 115 Natural Sciences, 147 Life Sciences, 43 Engineering Sciences, Total: 488

2016: 142 Humanities and Social Sciences, 115 Natural Sciences, 110 Life Sciences, 39 Engineering Sciences, Total: 406

2017: 182 Humanities and Social Sciences, 121 Natural Sciences, 151 Life Sciences, 59 Engineering Sciences, Total: 513

2018: 207 Humanities and Social Sciences, 118 Natural Sciences, 155 Life Sciences, 42 Engineering Sciences, Total: 522
DFG Funding Opportunities
For early career researchers

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- Preparing for a scientific mgmt. position
- Professorship or other scientific mgmt. position

- Student assistant in an RTG/GSC
- Position or fellowship in an RTG/GSC
- Emmy Noether Programme
- Individual Grant
- Walter Benjamin Programme abroad
- Research fellowship abroad
- Preparing for a scientific mgmt. position
- Professorship or other scientific mgmt. position
- Position in a DFG project
- Individual Grant
- Individual Grant
- Individual Grant
- Professorship in a (Clinical) Research Unit

~ summer 2019

DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers
31/01/2019 | University of Cologne
Walter Benjamin Programm
Starting July 2019

▶ **Aim**: early development of an independent scientific profile
▶ **Early phase** of a research career
▶ To carry out *one’s own research project*
▶ **Free choice** of host: research institute in Germany or abroad
▶ Important feature: *support of mobility*
▶ **Integration in research networks, mentoring** and further training opportunities by an experienced researcher/scientist at the host institution
Duration: **two years**

**Funding:**
- abroad: stipend
- in Germany: position

→ A period abroad and a period at a German university can be combined

A flexible allowance for direct project costs of 250 Euros/month

→ additional projects costs/consumables must be provided by the host institution
Criteria

► Applicant
  • Qualified to carry out the project
  • Scientific potential, career prospects

► Project
  • Independent, original
  • Excellent in relation to current career stage

► Environment
  • Declaration of host (in Germany) as to the support for the career development of applicant provided by host institution and host researcher
    → not a letter of support

Starting July 2019: Walter Benjamin Programme
Emmy Noether Programme

- Path to early academic independence
- Eligibility for professorial appointment by leading own independent junior research group

Requirements

- Postdoctoral research experience of at least 2 and max. 4 years (medicine: up to 6 years), +2 years per child
- Substantial international research experience
DFG Funding Opportunities
Emmy Noether Programme

► For excellently qualified postdoctoral researchers

► Research in Germany → host institution becomes the employer

► Duration of generally 6 years

► Position (E15) + project funds

► Position for temporary substitutes for clinicians
DFG Funding Opportunities
Emmy Noether annual meetings
Number of new Emmy Noether independent junior research groups by scientific discipline 2015 to 2018

- **Humanities and Social Sciences**
  - 2015: 6
  - 2016: 11
  - 2017: 7
  - 2018: 13

- **Life Sciences**
  - 2015: 29
  - 2016: 17
  - 2017: 25
  - 2018: 25

- **Natural Sciences**
  - 2015: 23
  - 2016: 24
  - 2017: 22
  - 2018: 20

- **Engineering Sciences**
  - 2015: 5
  - 2016: 3
  - 2017: 5
  - 2018: 5

Total:
- 2015: 63
- 2016: 55
- 2017: 59
- 2018: 63

DFG Funding Opportunities
Emmy Noether Programme

DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Scientists

32 13/06/2019
New proposals approved within the Emmy Noether Programme in 2017, by scientific discipline and gender

- Humanities and Social Sciences: 19
- Life Sciences: 14
- Natural Sciences: 11
- Engineering Sciences: 3
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DFG Funding Opportunities
Heisenberg Programme

► For researchers eligible for **professorial appointment**
► **Duration** of max. 5 years
► **Flexible type of funding**
  - Fellowship € 4,450
  - Position E-15 TVöD/TV-L
  - Position for temporary substitutes for clinicians
  - Professorship W2 or W3 → host university must establish permanent professorship
► **Flexible research funds**: € 12,000
► Fellowship and positions may be combined with research grant proposal
► **Proposal to the DFG**
DFG Funding Opportunities
New grants in the Heisenberg programme in 2017 (!)

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**Heisenberg fellowships**

- Humanities and Social Sciences: 15 (23.8%)
- Life Sciences: 22 (34.9%)
- Natural Sciences: 3 (4.8%)
- Engineering Sciences: 6 (9.5%)

Total: 63

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**Heisenberg professorships**

- Humanities and Social Sciences: 24 (60.0%)
- Life Sciences: 10 (25.0%)
- Natural Sciences: 6 (15.0%)
- Engineering Sciences: 3 (7.5%)

Total: 40
Topics

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Proposal and Review Process

Basic tips

► Carefully review and follow the guidelines and proposal instructions
  → Relevant information can be found on the DFG website

► Contact us if you have any questions

► Put yourself in the reviewers’ shoes

► Seek honest criticism from colleagues

► Start with smaller projects

► Plan a feasible timeline: On average, the time to decision is over six months
Proposal and Review Process
Modular funding opportunities
Proposal and Review Process
The proposal

A proposal consists of three parts:

1. **General information** → Applicant data, obligations, rules of good scientific practice

2. **Project description** → Current state of research, preliminary work, objectives, schedule

3. **Appendices** → CV that includes a limited number of publications
Proposal and Review Process
Electronic proposals and reviews via elan
Proposal and Review Process
In the individual grants programme

- Formal examination
- Reviewer selection
- Draft of funding recommendation
- Communication of funding recommendation
- Decision letter with reviewers’ comments

**Written Review**
- Reviewers
  - project quality
  - applicants’ qualifications
  - aims and work programme
  - working environment
  - grant budget

**Assessment**
- Review Board
  - assessment of reviewer selection
  - proposal and review
  - comparative merit and funding volume

**Decision**
- Joint Committee
  - cross-subject comparison

**Notification**
Proposal and Review Process

Review boards (Fachkollegien)
Proposal and Review Process
If at first you don’t succeed…

► Don’t be discouraged
► Take reviewer comments seriously but not personally
► Consult the DFG Head Office if you need advice or feel that you have been treated unfairly
► Consider reviewer comments – they might give you some pointers for reworking your proposal
1 | The DFG – About Us

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Advice for Applicants
Research career

► Develop your own and independent research profile
► Publish independently (if possible)
► Be flexible – find the best environment for your research
► Build networks of collaboration partners
► Develop alternative plans
► Take advantage of advice and information services
Advice for Applicants
On submitting proposals

► Decide on the proposal language: English or German
► Inform DFG Head Office in case a conflict of interest or competitive scenario exists
► Communicate openly with DFG Head Office staff
Advice for Applicants
Your CV

► Structure it clearly
► Include prizes, fellowships and awards
► Include time away from research (relating to family or illness, dependent care, etc.)
► List up to 10 of your most important publications
Advice for Applicants
Grant budget

► No upper limits

► Needs to be realistic and justified by the project

► Supplemental, project-specific needs vs. existing resources at the higher education institution

► Helpful to talk with others or seek advice from other grant applicants, recipients, institutions/organisations

► Information on staff amounts provided on the DFG website
Advice for Applicants
From a reviewer’s perspective

► Is the project important?

► Is the project idea current and original?

► Will the project result in significant findings? What new knowledge will be generated – what gaps in current knowledge would be filled?

► Is the applicant (or team of applicants) suitably qualified to carry out the project successfully?

► Are the proposed methods up to date and suitable for addressing the research question?

► Can the work programme be completed within the proposed timeframe?
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Early career grant programmes at a glance: www.dfg.de/research_careers

Programme information: www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes

DFG contacts: www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/head_office

DFG facts and figures: www.dfg.de/facts-figures

DFG funding atlas: www.dfg.de/fundingatlas

GERiT – German research institutions at a glance: www.gerit.org/en

DFG German Project Information System (GEPRIS): gepris.dfg.de/en

General questions: info-nachwuchs@dfg.de
For more information

- on the DFG: http://www.dfg.de/en
- on DFG-funded projects: http://gepris.dfg.de/en
- on over 25,000 German research institutes: http://www.gerit.org/en/