

# Guidelines

## Research Fellowships



## **I Funding Instrument**

Research fellowships are awarded for a specific and discrete research project abroad that will either be pursued individually or under the supervision of a qualified scientist or academic. Within this project the fellowship may also be used to prepare for a habilitation or an undertaking equivalent to a habilitation, to become familiar with a particular avenue of research or to learn specialised research methods.

DFG research fellowships serve to promote early career researchers. As an exception, scientists and academics who do not fall into this category may receive funding to dedicate themselves to a research topic of particular importance.

For the duration of the fellowship, recipients should not be required to carry out any work which is not directly relevant to the objective of the fellowship.

Fellowships are intended to cover the recipients' costs of living and may not be used to supplement grants from other funding organisations or income from employment.

Researchers with children are offered special funding options in conjunction with the fellowship to facilitate their stays abroad.

Partial fellowships may only be applied for in special personal situations (e.g. disability, serious illness of a close relative, or similar). In such cases, please contact the DFG Head Office.

## **II Eligibility Requirements**

As a scientist or academic, you are, in principle, eligible to apply for a research fellowship if you are integrated in the German science system. In general, you are considered to be integrated if you have worked continuously in a scientific capacity in Germany for at least three years during the doctoral and/or postdoctoral phase directly prior to submission of the proposal. If you are integrated in a foreign science system, you are not eligible to apply.

For proposals submitted from abroad, the eligibility requirements also stipulate that you must have completed the majority of your school and university education in Germany and have spent no more than three years in the same foreign country following completion of your doctorate. In addition, you must not have been working for the host institution selected for the research fellowship in a research capacity for more than one year. You must also declare that you intend

to continue your career in science in Germany at the end of the fellowship. The date of the proposal shall apply.

Furthermore, you require confirmation from a researcher that he/she will provide you with the necessary working resources in his/her research facility for the duration of the proposed project within the context of a fellowship (for example as a visiting researcher or visiting fellow).

If you will be hosted by a former Humboldt guest researcher, please note that certain conditions apply (cf. section VII.4).

Applicants must have a doctorate to be eligible to apply for fellowship funding by the DFG.

Please note that you may also apply once your thesis has been submitted to the examination office. In this case, your proposal must include a copy of your thesis/dissertation as well as a statement from the person who supervised your thesis with regard to your chances of success. If approved, funding cannot be accepted until all doctoral examinations have been successfully completed and corresponding proof is received by the DFG.

Doctoral fellowships are only funded by the DFG within the Research Training Group programme.

### **III Funding Duration**

As a rule, research fellowships are granted for a minimum of three months up to a maximum of two years. Renewal proposals can only be funded in closely related exceptional cases and are permissible for a maximum of one year.

Return grants are awarded for a maximum of six months and cannot be extended.

### **IV Scope of Funding**

#### **1 Basic fellowship**

As of 1 January 2015, the basic fellowship per month is €1,750.

## **2 Allowance for direct project costs**

In addition, a monthly allowance of €250 is provided to cover direct project costs, travel expenses, and publication expenses (excluding “grey literature”).

## **3 Foreign allowance**

A foreign allowance is also paid, which increases if the fellow is accompanied by his or her spouse or life partner (in accordance with the German Act on Registered Life Partnerships) and/or children.

To calculate individual research fellowship amounts, please refer to our award calculator, which can be accessed via the website listed below. Please note that variances may occur, for example due to fluctuations in the cost of living.

[www.dfg.de/award\\_calculator](http://www.dfg.de/award_calculator)

## **4 Travel allowance**

Reimbursements for stays abroad also include:

- round-trip travel (via the least expensive route);
- travel for the spouse/life partner and children if they accompany the fellow at the fellowship location for longer than six months within the duration of the fellowship abroad.

## **5 Additional publication costs**

If the most appropriate form of publication is in a specific book format and therefore high production costs are to be expected, you may apply for additional funding of up to €5,000 per year. The request must be justified accordingly.

## **6 Additional project expenses**

The DFG expects that all other expenses necessary for completion of the project be met by the host institute.

In addition, a co-sharing of maintenance costs by the host institute is desirable. Please include any possible commitments with the proposal.

## **7 Offsetting of independent income and third-party contributions**

The following items will be offset against the fellowship: income from active employment (sections 13,15,18 and 19 of the German Income Tax Act [*Einkommensteuergesetz*, EStG]); one-time contributions to assist with the cost of living and benefits with monetary value provided by the host institute or other funding organisations; and benefits received by the fellow in accordance with the legislation on parental allowances and parental leave (*Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz*, BEEG). Additional information can be found in the usage guidelines (DFG form 2.10, available in German only).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/2\\_10](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/2_10)

## **8 Taxes**

For information on tax liability, please refer to the usage guidelines in DFG form 2.10 (available in German only) prior to proposal submission and/or initiation of the fellowship.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/2\\_10](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/2_10)

## **V Benefits for Fellowship Recipients with Children**

### **1 Child allowance**

A monthly child allowance is paid for children up to 18 years of age (in accordance with section 2, paragraph 1, clauses 1 and 2 of the Federal Child Benefit Act [*Bundeskindergeldgesetz*, BKGG]).

This allowance totals €400/month for the first child and €100/month for each additional child.

Children of life partners can only be considered if it can be satisfactorily shown that they lived in the household of the fellow prior to the start of the fellowship (e.g. verification by the local German registry office [*Einwohnermeldeamt*]).

### **2 Support for costs associated with supplemental childcare – fellowship extension or childcare allowance**

If, during the fellowship, you are accompanied abroad by your children who are younger than 12 years of age, you can select from the following options:

## 2.1 Fellowship extension

The fellowship can be extended by the duration of the fellowship to a maximum of 12 months if, at the time the fellowship is granted, you have at least one child who is younger than 12 years of age. This also applies if the first child is born during the course of the fellowship.

## 2.2 Childcare costs

Instead of extending the fellowship by 12 months, it is possible to apply for childcare costs. Here, a maximum of the basic monthly fellowship amount is available for each extension month that is not used. This conversion of monthly basic allowances to childcare costs can be handled flexibly. For example, the fellowship can be extended by five months and a childcare allowance can be received for seven months.

The childcare costs must be verified by presenting bills and payment receipts. The following items may be reimbursed:

- the placement of children in kindergartens, day-care centres, day nurseries, children's homes and nursery schools as well as with childcare providers,
- costs for international schools at the fellowship location,
- the employment of childcare specialists, nurses and children's nurses as well as household help, provided they care for a child,
- babysitters and au pairs,
- supervision during homework time.

During stays in countries where the cost of professional childcare is above average (e.g. in the USA), additional expenses that exceed the basic allowance can be recognised in justified, individual cases. A requirement for this, however, is that the fellow contribute 50% of the costs in excess of the basic fellowship amount.

## VI Other Financial Assistance during the Fellowship

The DFG offers additional financial support during the fellowship period to facilitate the fellows' transition back to the German research system.

These measures may be applied for separately no sooner than six months after the start of the fellowship; for return grants, no sooner than 12 months after the start of the fellowship.

## **1 Travel support for establishing or intensifying scientific contacts in Germany**

The DFG supports your efforts to re-establish or intensify contacts in Germany during your stay abroad. For this purpose, the DFG provides funding for active participation at a conference, a specialist colloquium, for a lecture trip, to present research findings, for an interview in Germany (provided the costs are not covered by the host), or to establish or maintain scientific contacts in Germany.

Fellows who have spent at least six months abroad funded by the DFG are eligible to apply. For fellows staying abroad for at least 18 months, even if part of the stay is funded from outside sources, the DFG can provide up to two travel allowances. The trips are to be completed within four years after beginning the DFG fellowship.

## **2 Moving allowance for international fellowships**

A moving allowance towards the relocation costs on return to Germany is granted upon application if you are returning to Germany from a stay abroad within three months of completion of the fellowship, or after completion of a subsequent stay of up to one year funded by the host institute.

Fellows who are returning to Germany from countries outside of Europe are granted an allowance of €1,000. An additional €500 is granted for the spouse or life partner registered in accordance with German law as well as an additional €250 per child.

Fellows who are returning to Germany from countries within Europe are granted an allowance of €500. An additional €250 is granted for the spouse or life partner registered in accordance with German law as well as for each child.

A moving allowance can only be paid if the duration of the approved and actual DFG fellowship was at least six months and the moving costs are not assumed by a third party.

## **3 Return grants for reintegration in the German research system**

To facilitate the reintegration of grant recipients back into the German research system, fellows funded by the DFG may submit a supplemental proposal for a return grant. The proposals, in the form of a simple letter, should be sent to the DFG staff who administered your preceding award. Funding should be used to enable fellows to become reintegrated into the German research system, for example by presenting research findings in Germany

or for measures preparing them for their scientific/academic careers following their return to Germany.

Return grants can be applied for as domestic fellowships for a maximum of six months. To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must reside outside Germany, funded by a DFG fellowship, and the overall length of their stay within the framework of the DFG research fellowship must be at least 12 months.
- The return grant must be taken up no later than four years following the start of the fellowship.
- This period of up to four years must have been spent continuously abroad and at least half of this time in a DFG research fellowship.
- The proposal must be submitted from abroad no later than two months prior to the intended utilisation of the return grant.
- Applicants may not be on leave from a German research institution for the duration of the fellowship with the possibility of again working at the institution upon return from abroad.

The return grant should be used to continue research in the same scientific area. To carry out such research, recipients must be affiliated with a university or other research institution. An invitation from the host institution must be included in the proposal.

The subject area to be pursued during the grant must be specified in the proposal. A project description is not necessary.

If the stay abroad is not funded exclusively by the DFG, the associated stay abroad is to be documented.

A declaration must be included with the proposal that shows that the applicant will not be funded by other means upon return.

The grant will be terminated once the fellow receives or is eligible for a position or outside funding (e.g. from the Federal Employment Agency) in Germany. Recipients must notify the DFG of such changes immediately.



## VII Proposal Format and Submission

Proposals for research fellowships may be submitted at any time. Proposals for return grants should be submitted in the form of a simple letter and sent to the DFG staff who administered your preceding award (cf. section VI. 3).

Proposals must be submitted electronically. The online form can be accessed at [elan.dfg.de/en](http://elan.dfg.de/en)

To facilitate the reviewers' scientific evaluation, your proposal must include the following information and attachments.

*Please use the templates/formats as provided. Further information on the templates can be found under section VII.7 "Attachments". If you do not wish to use the templates, please use Arial 11 font for your texts.*

### **The following information will be requested in the electronic proposal:**

1. First page  
To provide information on your project, such as the work programme or the state of the art, please use the DFG project description template (cf. section VII.7a).
2. Project details  
Title, proposed duration, research area and keywords that characterise your project  
You will also be requested to submit a summary.

Please provide the title and the summary both in German and English.

The summary has two main goals:

- It will inform the interdisciplinary committees of the DFG, which make the final decision on your grant, of the principal aims of your project.
- If your project is funded, the summary will be published on the internet through an electronic information system. It should therefore be concise as well as comprehensible to a lay public. An electronic search will be helped if you avoid abbreviations and include suitable key words.

## 3. Applicant data

Biographical information, contact information, duration of stay, and (if applicable) co-funding provided by the host

## 4. Participating individuals (host institution)

Details on the host

*Please note the following:* If the foreign host is an ex-Humboldt visiting researcher, please only initially apply to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Jean-Paul-Straße 12, 53173 Bonn, Germany). Only if the Humboldt Foundation rejects/declines your proposal – or informs you in response to your proposal that there is no possibility of funding for you – may you apply for a DFG research fellowship. In this case, please include a copy of the letter from the Humboldt Foundation with your proposal.

## 5. Participating institutions (if applicable)

## 6. Concluding information

In submitting a proposal for a research fellowship to the DFG, you agree to:

- a) adhere to the rules of good scientific practice<sup>1</sup>.

The general principles of good scientific practice include, among others: maintaining professional standards, documenting results, rigorously questioning all findings, and attributing honestly any contributions by partners, competitors and predecessors.

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. The circumstances of each case will be considered on an individual basis. In cases where scientific misconduct has been established, the DFG may impose one or more of the following sanctions, depending on the nature and severity of the scientific misconduct:

- issuing a written reprimand to those involved;

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<sup>1</sup> The rules of good scientific practice are presented in detail in the [white paper entitled "Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice"](#) and in [the Funding Guidelines – General Terms and Conditions of DFG Grants](#) (DFG form 2.00).

- exclusion from the right to apply for DFG funds for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
  - revoking funding decisions (complete or partial cancellation of the grant, recalling granted funds, demanding repayment of funds spent);
  - demanding that those concerned either retract the discredited publications or correct the falsified data (in particular by publishing an erratum), or appropriately indicate the DFG's retraction of funding in the discredited publications;
  - exclusion from acting as a reviewer or from membership in DFG committees for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
  - denying voting rights and eligibility in elections for DFG statutory bodies and committees for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct.
- b) adhere to the regulations regarding publications/bibliographies as described under section VII.7. a und b (see below).
- c) inform the DFG of any changes following submission of your proposal.
- d) devote your total working time to your research project.
- e) submit a final report within four months after the DFG funding period detailing the status of your research and findings to date (note that the report must conform to scientific standards).
- f) not accept funding from other German research organisations or any other source (e.g. foreign institution) for the same project and to inform the DFG of any financial assistance you may receive and of any relevant changes in your personal/financial situation that may affect your fellowship amount.

You agree to

- the DFG's electronic processing and storage of data provided in conjunction with your proposal and to the transmission of such data to reviewers and committee members involved in the DFG's review and decision-making processes;
- having your address and communication data (e.g. telephone, fax, e-mail, internet website), as well as information on the content of your research project (e.g. topic, summary, keywords, international cooperation) published in the DFG's project database GEPRIS and - in excerpts (grant holder's name, institution and location) in the "Programmes and Projects" section of the electronic annual report. Please note that this bullet point only pertains if you were awarded the DFG funding requested. If you do not wish this information to be published electronically, please notify us in writing no later than four weeks after receipt of your award letter.

[www.dfg.de/annual\\_report](http://www.dfg.de/annual_report)

Please note that these declarations must be available before your proposal can be processed.

## 7. Attachments

Please attach the following documents to the electronic proposal form, preferably as PDF files (or in RTF). The document security settings should allow your texts to be read, copied and printed.

### a) Project description

Please use the template provided on the first page of the electronic fellowship application in elan.

Your project description, not to exceed 20 pages, should be understandable without referring to additional literature. To illustrate and enhance your presentation you may refer to your own and others' publications. Make it clear whenever you are referring to other researchers' work and explain your own preparatory work. Please list all **cited** publications on the state of the art in your bibliography here. This reference list is not considered your list of publications. Any unpublished work must be included with the proposal. However, note that reviewers are not required to read any of the works you cite. Reviews will be based only on the text of the actual proposal.

Please note that the DFG may reject any proposals not in compliance with these rules.

The following items must be addressed in your proposal:

1. Current state of research

2. Research objective and preliminary work

3. A project-related list of publications

Please list the publications that you believe are most important and that directly relate to the proposed project and document your preliminary work.

Please note that the maximum number of works you may list is ten publications. You may also list an unlimited number of patents, divided into the categories pending and issued.

If you do not have any project-related publications, please only list up to ten of your most important publications in your CV (see below).

The DFG is aware that researchers who are at an early stage of their careers may not yet have extensive publishing experience.

Please structure both types of lists as follows:

3.1 Articles which at the time of proposal submission have been published or officially accepted by publication outlets with scientific quality assurance, listed in standard format; book publications. For works that have been accepted for publication but not yet published, the manuscript must be submitted along with the publisher's acknowledgement of acceptance.

3.2 Other publications

Please note that the DFG may reject any proposals not in compliance with these rules.

4. Research plan, including proposed research methods
  5. Relevance of project to research career objectives
  6. Reasons for selecting host institution(s)
  7. Desired state date of fellowship
  8. Additional publication costs  
If you will be requesting additional publication funding of up to €5,000, please justify this accordingly (cf. section IV. 5).
  9. Additional funding  
If applicable, please provide additional information on
    - previous DFG funding
    - external funding
    - other funding requests for this project (including anticipated decision dates)
  10. If you have applied for a fellowship from other funding organisations on the same or a related research topic, please note that, in the case of multiple awards, accepting such a fellowship before or after approval of the DFG fellowship precludes your being able to accept fellowship funding from the DFG. The DFG fellowship may have to be refunded where applicable. However, it is still possible to supplement a DFG fellowship abroad with funding from the foreign host institution (cf. section IV. 7).
  11. Career plans  
Please describe where you envision continuing your research career following completion of your fellowship. The DFG expects that this will be at a German university or other German research institution. Please be precise.
- b) CV including school and university education (in tabular form) and publication list  
Applicants who wish to explain reasons for unavoidable delays in their scientific careers (e.g. longer stages of qualification, publication gaps or limited stays abroad due to childcare, protracted illnesses or disability, etc.) should indicate the respective

circumstance under “Additional information”. Although it is not mandatory that such personal information be disclosed when submitting a proposal to the DFG, it may be helpful in explaining gaps in scientific career paths. Further information on the topic of diversity and equal opportunities in the funding programmes of the DFG can be found at

[www.dfg.de/equal\\_opportunities](http://www.dfg.de/equal_opportunities)

[www.dfg.de/diversity/en](http://www.dfg.de/diversity/en)

Your CV must include a list of up to ten of your most important publications. These publications need not be related to your proposal.

Please structure both types of lists as follows:

1. Articles which at the time of proposal submission have been published or officially accepted by publication outlets with scientific quality assurance, listed in standard format; book publications. For works that have been accepted for publication but not yet published, the manuscript must be submitted along with the publisher's acknowledgement of acceptance.

2. Other publications

Under 3. you may list any patents, both issued and pending. Please note that there is no maximum number for patents.

3. Patents, subdivided into pending and issued.

- c) Statement by your host

The invitation of the host with whom you wish to undertake the project

- d) Certificates

Copies of degree certificates, your doctoral thesis and habilitation (if applicable) should be submitted in one document (if possible).

- e) If you have included your doctoral thesis and/or habilitation in your list of publications, please include a copy of each with your proposal.

## f) Scientific manuscripts

If you have made reference to any manuscripts that have been submitted but not yet published in your publication list/bibliography, please include copies of such work here (cf. section VII. 7a and b).

*If you are submitting your proposal prior to completion of the doctorate, please include*

- h) evidence that the doctoral examination process has started and you have submitted your doctoral thesis.
- i) a statement from the person who supervised your thesis with regard to your chances for succeeding with your doctoral project.

*If your project is currently being funded through other sources:*

- j) justification as to why additional funding through the DFG is necessary (please explain why you are applying for a research fellowship to supplement your current funding)

You may also submit other attachments.

When submitting your proposal electronically, you will be asked to upload the required documents. Please make sure that the security settings for the PDF documents allow your documents to be read, copied and printed, and note the maximum size of 10 MB per document. If your appendices exceed 200 pages in length, we ask that you also submit two hard copies in addition to the electronic version.

Save PDF documents according to the naming protocol listed at the end of this document to facilitate the processing of your proposal.

If you encounter any technical problems or have any questions regarding electronic proposal submission, please do not hesitate to contact our elan helpdesk

[elan-helpdesk@dfg.de](mailto:elan-helpdesk@dfg.de).

If you have any scientific questions, please contact the DFG programme contact responsible for your research field. A list can be found on the DFG's website at

[www.dfg.de/en/dfg\\_profile/head\\_office/structure/programme\\_contacts](http://www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/head_office/structure/programme_contacts)



## Naming Protocol for Proposal Documents

To facilitate the processing of your proposal, we request that you use the following document names when submitting your proposal.

Document	Document Name
project description (Beschreibung des Vorhabens)	Beschreibung_des_Vorhabens
dissertation (Dissertationsschrift)	Dissertation_<last name of author>
curriculum vitae and list of most important publications (Wissenschaftlicher Lebenslauf mit Verzeichnis wichtigster Publikationen)	CV_PubList_<person's last name>
publications (Publikationen)	<year>_<last name_author>_<keyword>
certificates (Zeugnisse)	<type of certificate>_<person's last name>
confirmation by host (Zusage der gastgebenden Person)	Arbeitsplatzzusage