DFG Funding Opportunities
for Postdocs

09/01/2023
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1 | The DFG – About Us

2 | DFG Funding Opportunities

3 | Review Process and Advice

4 | Links and Resources
The DFG is the largest independent and self-governing research funding organisation in Germany.

It is an association under German private law.

It serves all branches of science and the humanities by funding research projects.
The DFG
► funds research projects in the area of knowledge-driven research,
► maintains dialogue with society, politics and business, advises state institutions,
► supports the transfer of knowledge.

It takes particular care to promote
► international cooperation,
► early career researchers,
► gender equality and diversity in science and the humanities.
In 2021,

- the DFG funded around 31,600 projects with a budget that totalled €3.6 billion
- more one third of that budget, almost €1.3 billion, was spent for 16,600 projects of individual grants.
Amount of Research Funding Awarded by Programme in 2021 (in €m and %)

- **Individual grants programme**: 1,293.3 (35.5%)
- **Excellence Strategy**: 475.2 (13.0%)
- **Collaborative Research Centres**: 872.9 (23.9%)
- **Research Training Groups**: 238.5 (6.5%)
- **Research Units**: 196.4 (5.4%)
- **Priority Programmes**: 236.6 (6.5%)
- **Infrastructure funding**: 271.7 (7.5%)
- **Prizes, other**: 48.1 (1.3%)
Amount of Research Funding Awarded by Scientific Discipline for Each Calendar Year
2018 to 2021 (in €m and %)

2018

- Humanities and Social Sciences: 529.7 (15.6%)
- Life Sciences: 285.7 (8.4%)
- Natural Sciences: 492.9 (15.0%)
- Engineering Sciences: 251.6 (7.7%)
- Interdisciplinary: 156.1 (4.3%)

2019

- Humanities and Social Sciences: 759.9 (22.3%)
- Life Sciences: 639.3 (19.5%)
- Natural Sciences: 639.3 (19.5%)
- Engineering Sciences: 526.3 (15.9%)
- Interdisciplinary: 143.4 (4.3%)

2020

- Humanities and Social Sciences: 735.2 (22.4%)
- Life Sciences: 665.0 (20.1%)
- Natural Sciences: 665.0 (20.1%)
- Engineering Sciences: 590.4 (16.2%)
- Interdisciplinary: 852.5 (23.4%)

2021

- Humanities and Social Sciences: 757.5 (22.9%)
- Life Sciences: 724.2 (19.9%)
- Natural Sciences: 1,322.6 (36.3%)
- Engineering Sciences: 1,215.9 (36.8%)
- Interdisciplinary: 156.1 (4.3%)

www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/facts_figures/statistics
Funding Rates* in the Individual Grants Programme by scientific discipline
2018 to 2021 (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 (incl. Individual proposals, research fellowships, the Emmy Noether Programme, the Heisenberg Programme and Reinhart Koselleck projects)
Eligibility

Researchers

► who have completed their scientific training, i.e. who hold a doctorate and
► who (would like to) work in Germany.
► Open, bottom-up choice of research topics
► Basic research in any field of science and the humanities
► No age restrictions
► Individual career phases and family-related career breaks are considered in the review process
► 10 Principles of Effective Career Support in Academia
► No deadlines*

excl. Priority Programmes, international calls etc.
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DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

- Own proposal for individuals/investigators:
  - Walter Benjamin Programme
  - Emmy Noether Programme
  - Heisenberg Programme

- For projects/themes:
  - Individual Research Grant incl. Temporary Position for Principal Investigators

- For open positions:
  - Postdoc Position in a DFG-funded project

DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes
DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

- **own proposal**
  - for individuals/investigators
    - Walter Benjamin Programme
  - for projects/themes
    - Individual Research Grant incl. Temporary Position for Principal Investigators

- **job application**
  - for open positions
    - Postdoc Position in a DFG-funded project

- **early postdocs**
- **advanced postdocs**
- **appointable**
- **professorship**

Visit the following links for more information:
- [www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers)
- [www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes)
- [www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes)
Positions for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers in DFG-funded projects:

- **Duration** of funding depends on the project
- **Employer**: a university or research institute in Germany
- **Position**: E13-E14 TVöD/TV-L
- **Apply** to the project’s PI
DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

- **early postdocs**
  - Walter Benjamin Programme
  - Emmy Noether Programme
  - Heisenberg Programme

- **advanced postdocs**
  - Appointment

- **professorship**

- **own proposal**
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    - incl. Temporary Position for Principal Investigators

- **job application**
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- **for open positions**
  - Postdoc Position
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www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes
Individual Research Grants offer you an opportunity to pursue your research project in Germany.

- Funding generally for up to three years.
- Your host institution becomes your employer.

Flexible funding modules:
- Staff, consumables, travel
- Instrumentation, publication funding, public relations
- ... 
- module »Temporary Position for Principal Investigators« E13-E14 TVöD/TV-L

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/individual/research_grants
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/faq/faq_temporary_positions
New Awards in the Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators* Scheme by Scientific Discipline 2018 to 2021

www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/facts_figures/statistics

![Chart showing new awards by scientific discipline from 2018 to 2021](chart.png)

- **Humanities and Social Sciences**
  - 2018: 207
  - 2019: 183
  - 2020: 214
  - 2021: 176

- **Life Sciences**
  - 2018: 118
  - 2019: 126
  - 2020: 107
  - 2021: 117

- **Natural Sciences**
  - 2018: 155
  - 2019: 120
  - 2020: 146
  - 2021: 112

- **Engineering Sciences**
  - 2018: 42
  - 2019: 45
  - 2020: 45
  - 2021: 47

DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

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early postdocs  advanced postdocs  appoint-able  professorship

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  Postdoc Position in a DFG-funded project

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes
Walter Benjamin Programme

► **Aim:** Promoting **autonomy and mobility** in an **early postdoc phase**

► **Mobility:** applicants should move to a **new host institution**, either abroad or in Germany – or combining stays at different places

► **Career support:** host researcher advises you on your research career and introduces you to academic networks

► **Duration:** Funding for up to two years

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/individual/walter_benjamin
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/faq/faq_walter_benjamin
Walter Benjamin Programme

In Germany
Position: E13 TVöD/TV-L
(or position for temporary substitutes for clinicians)
You are employed by your host institution

Allowance for direct project costs: 250 €/month
→ host institution needs to provide all additional project costs

Abroad
Fellowship: 1,750 €/month +X
+ foreign allowance
+ cost of living allowance
+ child allowance (if applicable)
+ possibility of 6-months return grant
→ use the award calculator on the DFG website
Benefits for Parents

Position in Germany:

► Support through *Bundeseltern geld- und Elternzeitgesetz (BEEG)*

Fellowship abroad:

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

► *Extension of fellowship* max. 12 months or *reimbursement of childcare costs*
  ● Up to 12 × € 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

[DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs](www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/individual/walter_benjamin)  
[www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/faq/faq_walter_benjamin](www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/faq/faq_walter_benjamin)
International Destinations of Walter Benjamin Fellows in 2021

- USA: 171
- UK: 58
- France: 19
- Canada: 19
- Switzerland: 17
- Sweden: 11
- Netherlands: 11
- Israel: 11
- Australia: 11
- Other: 63
DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

- Emmy Noether Programme
- Heisenberg Programme
- Walter Benjamin Programme

Individual Research Grant
- incl. Temporary Position for Principal Investigators

Postdoc Position
- in a DFG-funded project

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes
Emmy Noether Programme

► Path to early academic independence
► Eligibility for professorial appointment by leading one’s own independent junior research group

Requirements:
► For outstanding postdoctoral researchers with 2-4 years of postdoctoral experience
  (medicine: up to 6 years; possible extensions for parents)
► Substantial international research experience
► Excellent research project
Emmy Noether Programme

► Funding for six years

► Your host institution in Germany becomes your employer

► Funding includes
  • position: E15 TVöD/TV-L
    (or position for temporary substitutes for clinicians)
  • project funds
  • family allowance possible

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/individual/emmy_noether
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/faq/faq_emmy_noether
Number of New Emmy Noether Independent Junior Research Groups by Scientific Discipline 2018 to 2021

www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/facts_figures/statistics
New Proposals Approved within the Emmy Noether Programme in 2021, by Scientific Discipline and Gender

www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/facts_figures/statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Sciences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annual Emmy Noether Meetings

www.dfg.de/foerderung/programme/einzelfoerderung/emmy_noether/jahrestreffen/2022 (in German)
DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

- **Walter Benjamin Programme**
- **Emmy Noether Programme**
- **Heisenberg Programme**

- **Individual Research Grant**
  incl. Temporary Position for Principal Investigators

- **Postdoc Position**
  in a DFG-funded project

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes
Heisenberg Programme

► Enabling outstanding researchers to prepare for a **senior academic role** while continuing their research work

► For researchers eligible for **professorial appointment**

► Funding for **up to five years**

► In Germany or abroad
Heisenberg Programme

Flexible choice of individual funding after the proposal is approved:

- 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: € 1,000 per month

Fellowship and positions may be combined with Research Grant proposal

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/individual/heisenberg
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/faq/faq_heisenberg
Number of Heisenberg Grantees* by Scientific Discipline in 2021

Humanities and Social Sciences (106)
Life Sciences (126)
Natural Sciences (95)
Engineering Sciences (21)

total (348)

www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/facts_figures/statistics
Biannual Heisenberg Network Meetings

www.dfg.de/dfg_magazin/aus_der_dfg/karrierewege/heisenberg_dossier/heisenberg_treffen_2022 (in German)
DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

- **Early postdocs**
  - Own proposal for individuals/investigators
  - Walter Benjamin Programme

- **Advanced postdocs**
  - Own proposal for projects/themes
  - Emmy Noether Programme
  - Individual Research Grant incl. Temporary Position for Principal Investigators

- **Appointable**
  - Heisenberg Programme

- **Professorship**

- **Scientific Networks**

- **Job application for open positions**
  - Postdoc Position in a DFG-funded project
  - Participation Workshop for Early Career Investigators

Additional Resources:
- www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/research_careers
- www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes
- www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/announcements_proposals
Topics

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Preparing Your Proposal

- Start with smaller projects
- Carefully read and follow the guidelines and proposal instructions
- Necessary information can be found on the DFG website
- Questions? Ask for help
DFG Contacts

For questions on eligibility:
verfahren-nachwuchs@dfg.de

For general questions on programmes for research careers:
info-researchcareers@dfg.de

All DFG contacts:
www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/head_office
Prepping Your Proposal

► Put yourself in the reviewers’ shoes
► Seek honest criticism from colleagues
► Plan on a feasible timeline: on average, the time to decision is over six months
Preparing Your Proposal

► 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
Preparing Your CV

► DFG’s CV template

- Include prizes, fellowships and awards
- Mention time away from research relating e.g. to family, illness or dependent care; no details required

► List up to ten of your most important publications

www.dfg.de/formulare/53_200_elan/53_200_en_elan.rtf
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes/tips_proposals
www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes/proposal_information
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

► Seek advice from other grant applicants, recipients, institutions

► List of average personnel rates on DFG website
Submitting Your Proposal via *elan*

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes/proposal_information
Review Process in the Individual Grants Programme

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes/arriving_decision

DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

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DFG Head Office

formal examination

reviewer selection

Proposal

Written Reviews

Reviewers

• project quality
• applicants’ qualifications
• aims and work programme
• working environment
• grant budget

draft of funding recommendation

Assessment

Review Board

• assessment of reviewer selection
• proposal and reviews
• comparative merit and funding volume

inquiries
Review Boards (Fachkollegien)

www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/statutory_bodies/review_boards
Review Process in the Individual Grants Programme

DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

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www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes/arriving_decision

- **Notification**
  - confidential

- **DFG Head Office**
  - inquiries

- **Proposal**
  - formal examination
  - reviewer selection

- **Written Reviews**
  - Reviewers
  - • project quality
  - • applicants' qualifications
  - • aims and work programme
  - • working environment
  - • grant budget

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

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

- **draft of funding recommendation**
- **communication of funding recommendation**
- **decision letter with reviewers' comments**
- **Notification**
In Case Your Proposal Is not Successful...

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

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes/approval_rejection
Advice for Research Careers

► Develop your own and independent research profile
► Publish independently (or with various researchers)
► Be mobile and find the best environment for your research
► Build networks of collaboration partners
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Links and Resources

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


► Video on DFG decisions: https://youtu.be/NUIlfyUOOCM

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

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

► General questions about research careers: info-researchcareers@dfg.de

► Contacts: www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/head_office