DFG Funding Opportunities
for Early Career Researchers

Dr. Astrid Evers | CAU Kiel | 12.09.2018
1 | The DFG – About Us

2 | DFG Funding Opportunities

3 | Proposal and Review Process

4 | Advice for Applicants
The DFG – About Us

Our organisation

The DFG is the largest independent research funding organisation in Germany.

It is an association under German private law.

Its member organisations include German universities, non-university research institutions, academies of sciences and humanities, and scientific associations.

It serves all branches of science and the humanities by funding research projects.
The DFG facilitates national and international cooperation among researchers.

It provides scientific policy advice and fosters relations with the private sector.

It promotes gender equality in the German scientific and academic communities.

It encourages the advancement and training of early-career researchers.
The DFG – About Us
Our budget

Total budget approx. **€ 3.2 billion** in 2017.

- 67.9 % German federal government
- 31.2 % German states
- 0.9 % others
In 2017, the DFG funded over 32,000 projects

- Individual research projects
- Research collaborations
- Research infrastructure
- Coordinated programmes
The DFG – About Us
Subject areas

- Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Economics
- Jurisprudence

- Life Sciences
- Medicine
- Biology

- Engineering Sciences
- Computer Science
- Process Engineering

- Physics
- Mathematics
- Geosciences
- Chemistry
The DFG – About Us
Funding by discipline 2014-2017

Amount of research funding awarded by scientific discipline for each calendar year (in €m and %)
Research topic: open, bottom-up
Type of research: basic research in any field of science and the humanities
Evaluation: multi-level peer-review
Deadlines: none*
Note: individual career phases and family-related career breaks are considered

* Exceptions: Priority Programmes, international activities
Researchers

- who have completed their scientific training, i.e. who hold a **doctorate** and
- who would like to work **in Germany**
- of **any age**
Topics

1 | The DFG – About Us

2 | DFG Funding Opportunities

3 | Proposal and Review Process

4 | Useful Advice for Applicants
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 | Position or fellowship in an RTG | Research fellowship abroad | Research fellowship abroad | Research fellowship abroad | Professorship in a (Clinical) Research Unit

Student assistant in a DFG project | Position in a DFG project | Position in a DFG project | Position in a DFG project | Position in a DFG project
DFG Funding Opportunities
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- Emmy Noether Programme
- Heisenberg Programme
- Temp. principal investigator position

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- Professorship in a (Clinical) Research Unit
More than 1,000 positions for early career researchers:

► Individual projects (*Einzelförderung*)
► Research Units (*Forschungsgruppen*)
► Priority Programmes (*Schwerpunktprogramme*)
► Collaborative Research Centres (*Sonderforschungsbereiche*)
► Research Training Groups (*Graduiertenkollegs*)
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

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- Position in a DFG project
- Position in a DFG project
- Position in a DFG project
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
  - allowance for direct project costs
  - foreign allowance
  - cost of living allowance
  - child allowance (where applicable)
  - travel allowance

→ award calculator at DFG website

Proposal to the DFG
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 Awarded by Scientific Discipline 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Number of Fellowships</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.6 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>56.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>28.4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering Sciences</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10.8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 388 new research fellowships (not including return grants)
Funding rates for research fellowships (not including return grants)

<table>
<thead>
<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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>86.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>68.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>70.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers
Kiel | 12/09/2018
DFG Funding Opportunities
Research fellowships (Forschungsstipendien)

Research fellowships – destinations for research visits 2017

USA, 496
Great Britain, 133
Canada, 52
Australia, 42
Switzerland, 35
France, 32
Netherlands, 28
Sweden, 23
Spain, 18
Denmark, 11
other countries, 59

Based on ongoing research fellowships in 2017, not including return grants. Recipients of research fellowships can undertake more than one research visit.

DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers
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Individual Grants offer an opportunity to pursue your own research project in Germany.

- Duration for up to 3 years
- Allows flexibility: Funding for staff, consumables, travel, instrumentation, publication funding etc.
- Additional module: Temporary position for principal investigator (Eigene Stelle)
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
DFG Funding Opportunities  
Temporary position for principal investigators (Eigene Stelle)

New awards in temporary positions for principal investigators* scheme by scientific discipline 2014 to 2017

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Life Sciences</th>
<th>Natural Sciences</th>
<th>Engineering Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>100</td>
<td>107</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>513</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* New proposals
DFG Funding Opportunities
Emmy Noether Programme

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

Requirements
► For excellently qualified postdocs with an outstanding research project
► 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

- **Research in Germany** → host institution becomes the employer
- **Duration** of generally 6 years
- Group leader **position** (E15 TVöD/TV-L), positions for staff, consumables, travel, instrumentation, publication funding etc.
- Position for temporary substitutes for **clinicians**
- **Proposal to the DFG**
Number of newly approved and reviewed Emmy Noether independent junior research groups by scientific discipline 2014 to 2017

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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>approved</td>
<td>reviewed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
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Study about DFG funding instruments and career paths

- Compares the career paths of more than one thousand applicants in 2007 and 2008 in funding programmes relevant to early-career researchers
- Short version (“DFG infobrief”) available in English
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- Position in a DFG project
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

► Projects in Germany may be combined with research grant proposal

► **Proposal to the DFG**
1 | The DFG – About Us

2 | DFG Funding Opportunities

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4 | Advice for Applicants
Proposal and Review Process
Electronic proposals and reviews via *elan*

Register
If you do not have an elan account, please register here:

[Register]

Login
If you have an elan account and would like to log in, please enter the following information:

E-Mail address: [ ]

Password: [ ]

Save E-Mail address: [ ]

[Login]
Proposal and Review Process
Preparing Your 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
Preparing Your Proposal

DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers
Kiel | 12/09/2018
Proposal and Review Process
Preparing Your Proposal

► 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

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

Grant budget

► No upper limits
► Needs to be realistic and justified by the project
► Start with smaller projects
► Supplemental, project-specific needs vs. existing resources at the higher education institution (*Grundausstattung*)
► Helpful to talk with others or seek advice from other grant applicants, recipients, institutions/organisations
► Information on staff amounts provided on the DFG website
Preparing Your Proposal

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
Proposal and Review Process
DFG contacts

For questions on **eligibility:**

verfahren-nachwuchs@dfg.de
Phone: +49 (0)228 885-3008
Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:00 a.m. to noon

**DFG contacts:**
www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/head_office
Proposal and Review Process
In the individual grants programme

DFG Head Office

- formal examination
- reviewer selection

Written Review

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

Assessment

- assessment of reviewer selection
- proposal and review
- comparative merit and funding volume

Review Board

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

Communication of funding recommendation

Decision

- cross-subject comparison

Joint Committee

Draft of funding recommendation

Proposal

Notification

Decision letter with reviewers’ comments

Confidential inquiries
Proposal and Review Process
Review boards (Fachkollegien)
Topics

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DFG Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers
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Advice for Applicants
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
► Read through reviewer comments carefully – they might give you some pointers for reworking your proposal
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
► Take advantage of advice and information services
For more information

► Early career grant programmes at a glance: www.dfg.de/research_careers

► Funding Programmes in detail: www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes

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

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


► General questions: info-nachwuchs@dfg.de

Thank you for your attention

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+49-228-885-2894
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?
Advice for Applicants
10 golden rules for submitting a proposal

1. The proposal follows the guidelines and instructions and does not exceed the maximum allowable length.

2. The proposal is clear, precise, well structured and understandable to a non-expert audience.

3. The project idea is original and contributes considerably to our understanding of scientific (and social) questions.

4. The scientific aims are focused on central questions, theses and hypotheses.

5. The descriptions of the current state of research are up to date and relate directly to the project’s objectives.
Advice for Applicants
10 golden rules for submitting a proposal

6. The preliminary work and personal track record reflect the qualifications and academic/scientific independence of the applicant.

7. The work programme is clear and follows a realistic timeline.

8. The methods are tailored to address the issues at hand.

9. The proposed budget is consistent with the work programme.

10. Information relevant to the proposal, such as unpublished manuscripts and written agreements with significant cooperation partners, are included.