

Guide to applying for internal research funding from TU Berlin:

Initial acquisition of third-party funding – Postdoc Funding – Initiating collaborative projects

The aim of TU Berlin's internal support for research projects

TU Berlin supports and promotes the research activities of its researchers on the basis of a flexible set of “internal research support instruments”¹. These instruments are used in order to support research and contribute to the development of key application areas of the TU Berlin. They are conceived to meet the needs of researchers, as well as to reflect the objectives of TU Berlin. Accordingly, TU's internal research support is open for exceptional projects “out of the ordinary”. (Academic Senate Resolution of 12 Dec. 2012).

1. Support in the initial acquisition of third-party funds for newly appointed professors and equivalent (Advice: Dr. Tim Köhler-Ramm, VC 12)

Purpose of this instrument

The purpose of the funding instrument “**initial acquisition of third-party funding**” is to make it easy for **newly appointed professors** (5 years after their initial appointment to a university) **and equivalent** to access third-party funding and to support them in developing their Chair or group with the aid of third-party funded projects.

Funding is provided for the preparation of a third-party funding application.

Applicants

Newly appointed professors (first 5 years after their initial appointment at a university).

The same status is granted to Emmy Noether Grantees, ERC Starting Grantees and persons in similar positions, who as a junior research group leader have received excellent funding in the context of competitive programs.

Scope of financial support

Funding for personnel TV-L E13 for a maximum of 6 months (FTE) plus max. EUR 5000 for material resources. Funding is provided for the preparation of a third-party funding application.

Application procedure

Funding tenders are published regularly up to three times per year.

Decision-making structure

Proposals are in competition with each other. They are submitted to the *Strukturkommission* (Structural Commission) for their recommendation. The Vice President for Research, Appointment Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer makes the final decision.

¹ In this regard see Research Promotion Services webpage: <http://www.tu-berlin.de/?id=187966>

Selection criteria

The *Strukturkommission* convenes to assess the proposals on the basis of the criteria defined below. In their proposals, applicants thus need to appropriately address these questions:

Selection criteria

- Is the proposal tailored to the aims of the funder and/or support program and does the proposal stand a good chance of being successful?
- Has it been clearly demonstrated that the planned project contributes to the strengthening or ongoing development of the Chair? Is the significance of the project for the Chair described?
- What preparations have been made for the research project and is the necessity of any additional preliminary work well founded?
- Is the project schedule detailed, clearly structured and readily understandable?
- Have contacts already been initiated with the funder and are they documented?

2. Support in the initial acquisition of third-party funds for junior researchers (masters or comparable qualification) (Advice: Dr. Tim Köhler-Ramm, VC 12)

Purpose of this instrument

The funding instrument aims to help junior researchers (masters or comparable qualification), who have not yet obtained a doctorate. The funding is intended for the preparation of an application for third-party funding.

The professor who applies for the third-party funded project in which the junior researcher shall work accepts, by their application, the obligation to support the junior researcher. The junior researcher shall gain in-depth experience in the intended third-party funded project for his/her work in research. The support and preparation of the third-party funded project application serves the further scientific qualification and scientific orientation of the junior researcher. The accompanying professor may not belong to the group of newly appointed professors.

Applicants

Professors who wish to support a junior researcher with a masters or comparable qualification within the scope of a third-party funding project.

Scope of financial support

Funding for personnel TV-L E13 for a maximum of 6 months (FTE) plus max. EUR 5000 for material resources.

Funding is provided for the preparation of a third-party funding application.

Application procedure

Funding tenders are published regularly up to three times per year.

Decision-making structure

Proposals are in competition with each other. They are submitted to the *Strukturkommission* (Structural Committee) for their recommendation. The Vice President for Research, Appointment Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer makes the final decision.

Selection criteria

The *Strukturkommission* convenes to assess the proposals on the basis of the criteria defined below. In their proposals, applicants thus need to appropriately address these questions:

Selection criteria

- Is the proposal tailored to the aims of the funder and/or support program and does the proposal stand a good chance of being successful?
- Does the junior researcher possess the qualifications required to organize the research project?
- Is the planned project suitable in terms of supporting junior researchers in applying for third-party funding?
- What preparations have been made for the research project and is the necessity of any additional preliminary work well founded?
- Is the project schedule detailed, clearly structured and readily understandable?
- Have contacts already been initiated with the funder and are they documented?

3. Postdoc Funding - temporary position as principal investigator (Advice: Dr. Tim Köhler-Ramm, VC 12)

Purpose of this instrument

This instrument seeks to advance outstanding junior **PhD researchers for a maximum of three years after their PhD** in the next stages of their career and provides support by ensuring financing for preparation of an application to the DFG for funding for a temporary position as principal investigator or for comparable programs (such as those sponsored by the Thyssen Foundation).

Eligible applicants

Eligible for application are postdoctoral candidates, max. 3 years after completion of their PhD (awarding of the certificate if no more than one year passed between when you were presented with the certificate and when you took the *viva voce* examination; otherwise, it is the date of the *viva voce* examination). Upon submission of the application, the dissertation must already have been submitted and the PhD defence successfully passed. If one or more children under the age of 18 are taken care of, the period of eligibility is extended by two years per child.

Scope of financial support

Funding for personnel TV-L E13 for a maximum of 6 months (FTE) for financing the applicant plus a maximum of EUR 5000 for material resources.

Funding is provided for the preparation of a third-party funding application.

Application process

Funding tenders are published regularly up to three times per year.

Decision-making structure

Proposals are in competition with each other. They are submitted to the *Strukturkommission* (Structural Committee) of the Academic Senate (SK) for recommendations. Within the scope of a public application pitch, the applicants present their projects to the Strukturkommission of the Academic Senate (SK) and a public made up of interested parties from TU Berlin. Subsequently, the Strukturkommission will consult on recommendations in a non-public session.

The Vice President for Research, Appointment Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer makes the final decision.

Selection criteria

The *Strukturkommission* convenes to assess the proposals on the basis of the criteria defined below. In their proposals, applicants thus need to appropriately address these questions:

Selection criteria

- How long ago was the doctorate obtained and was it completed with an above-average grade?
- Have there already been high-ranking / relevant contributions at conferences and/or to publications.
- Is it obvious that the planned project will promote the applicant's academic career?
- Is the letter of support/statement from the Chair sufficiently detailed as regards:
 - the intrinsic interest of the project
 - interest in the junior researcher
 - expanding the research spectrum of the Chair / promoting the university's structural development
 - the necessity of funding from internal TU research support.
- Is the project concept innovative?
- What preliminary work does the research project require and is the need for further preliminary work justified?
- How suitable is the chosen Chair to which the position is to be attached? Does the post-doc project supplement or expand its research profile?
- Have further cooperation partners at TU Berlin and beyond been included, and is this cooperation described?
- Is the project schedule detailed, clearly structured and readily understandable?
- Is the proposal tailored to the aims of the funder and/or support program and is there a good chance of the proposal being successful?
- How convincing is the presentation of the applicant for the Strukturkommission and the public made up of interested parties from TU Berlin.

4. Internal funding for initiating collaborative projects (Advice: Dr. Sören Stange, VC 1)

Purpose of this instrument

Support for the application within the scope of a joint application. Preparation of externally financed joint research projects, for example, for coordinated DFG procedures, EU or BMBF joint projects or other comparable cooperation models.

Eligible applicants

Faculty members of one or more Chairs are eligible to apply.

Scope of offered support

Budget in the amount of up to 9 person months for pay scale TV-L EG 13², a single 6-month extension is possible in exceptional cases. The budget is to be used in support of the application process.

Application procedure

Applications can be submitted at any time.

Financial support for renewal proposals is only possible in exceptional cases if there is no personnel available for the coordination / management within the network.

Furthermore, the applicants are given the possibility to introduce the concept in a joint discussion with the VPFB (as well as the VPFB Team, department V and faculty) and to determine suitable support offers.

Upon request, the research department will act as an intermediary to provide experienced speakers from existing networks for peer-to-peer consulting.

² The budget can be used for staff and materials. To calculate standard average staff costs at TU Berlin see: <http://www.tu-berlin.de/?id=66478>

Decision-making structure

The Vice President for Research, Appointment Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer makes the final decision.

Selection criteria

The Vice President for Research, Appointment Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer assesses the proposals on the basis of the following criteria. In their proposals, applicants should thus ensure that they appropriately address these questions:

Selection criteria

- Have (depending on the type of collaboration) internal, regional, national and international research network and/or cooperation partners been considered? Has collaboration between the partners been sufficiently described?
- Has preliminary project work already started and is the need for further preliminary work justified?
- Are female researchers involved and is the age structure of the applicants balanced?
- Are junior researchers involved and is there a clear support concept?
- Is the necessity for financing from the central TUB budget adequately justified? Have alternative financing options (Chairs, cooperation partners) been considered?
- Is the project schedule detailed, clearly structured and readily understandable?
- Does the budget plan provide a detailed description of how the requested funding is to be used?
- Is the proposal tailored to the aims of the funder and/or support program and is there a good chance of the proposal being successful?
- Have contacts already been initiated with the funder and are they documented? Has/have the applicant(s) been asked to submit a preliminary or full proposal?

Important general information on the application process

TU Internal Research Funding tenders in support of the **initial acquisition of third-party funding and Postdocs** are published on a regular basis.

Submission deadlines are published on the webpage of Research Promotion Section³.

The current tender as well as the documents for the application can be downloaded at <http://www.tu-berlin.de/?id=187966>

We in the Research Promotion Section are happy to advise before you submit your application. Make an appointment as early as possible, and we will give you tips and we can discuss the required information for initiating collaborative projects. Please enter your contact data on the application form so that we can contact you if we have any questions about your proposal.

- Please send your proposal
(a) **by post as hard copy**, signed with all appendices and if applicable, co-signed by the managing director (GD) of the Institute and dean **to the Research Promotion Section – VC 12** in addition to
(b) **an electronic version as one PDF file** (max. 10 MB) to Research Promotion Section (forschungsfoerderung@vc.tu-berlin.de) (appendices 1–4 in numerical order are required at the least).

³ <http://www.forschung.tu-berlin.de/servicebereich>

- **Necessity of co-signing of the application for research funding by the managing director (GD) of the Institute and dean:** If an internally funded preparatory project and resulting third-party funded project can be carried out **without a commitment to resources** (e. g. staffing, floor space and/or materials), the application for internal research funding **does not need to be co-signed**.

If a commitment to resources by the institute and/or faculty **is required** for the preparation of a third-party funding application or for the resulting third-party funded project, the application for internal research funding **needs to be co-signed** by the managing director (GD) of the Institute and the dean. This co-signing is **mandatory** for applications for Postdoc Funding.

If during the application phase the project leader wants to ensure that the resources applied for will be available at the time the project is awarded, he/she should also involve the managing director GD/dean in the application process.

If the managing director GD/dean are not involved in the application process, no subsequent claims are allowed vis-à-vis the Institute, the Faculty, the Central University Administration or the central budget with regard to funding (staff, materials, rooms).

Please note that your entitlement to staff and floor space is subject to the internal guidelines of your Faculty.

The project leader assumes responsibility for the accuracy of the information provided to VC.

Applications for initial acquisition of third-party funding and support for postdocs

- Prior to submitting your application, please ensure that all appendices are attached and complete.
- Proposals are reviewed by [members of the Strukturkommission](#)⁴ and a recommendation is then issued. **When describing your project, please remember that persons of all status groups (including those outside your discipline) will also sit on the Strukturkommission and evaluate your application; you should thus formulate your proposal in accessible language.**
- The Vice President for Research, Appointment Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer is responsible for approving the project. You will receive a written letter of approval or rejection. Thereafter you can personally contact Dr. Tim Köhler-Ramm (VC 12) to learn the reasons in case your application was rejected.

If your application is successful, you will receive an approval letter and all the information you will need to start the staff hiring process.

In the case of applications for Postdoc funding

- Please be aware at the time of your application that you must appear at the appraisal session of the Strukturkommission on the date given in the invitation to tender in order to present your project. **Applicants who cannot take part on the appointed date of the presentation or do not arrive punctually cannot be taken into consideration in the further process.**

Travel costs for the journey to the presentation cannot be reimbursed by TU Berlin.

⁴ <http://www.tu-berlin.de/?id=21986>

What is supported in the context of “initial acquisition of third-party funding”, what needs to be considered?

- Support is granted for the preliminary working and application phases.
- Preliminary work involved in preparing preliminary applications (e.g. BMBF or BMWi projects) can also receive support.
- Junior researchers who have not yet acquired a PhD are also regarded as junior researchers in connection with the instrument “initial acquisition of third-party funding”.
- Prior to starting the application process, we recommend that you inform yourself about ongoing research activities at TU Berlin in order to avoid any possible overlap and/or to identify potential cooperation partners for your planned project.

What is supported in the context of “Postdoc Funding”, what needs to be considered?

- Support is granted for the preliminary working phase and application process.
- Good PhD grades are required.
- Further thematic development of the innovative aspects of the research activity is desired.
- Prior to starting the application process, we recommend that you inform yourself about ongoing research activities at TU Berlin in order to avoid any possible overlap and/or to identify potential cooperation partners for your planned project.

What is supported in the context of “initiating collaborative projects”, what needs to be considered?

- Support is granted primarily for the preliminary working phase and application process.
- Preliminary work and application process support is provided only if host status or coordinator function is being applied for.
- Depending on the type of collaboration, please consider any possible internal, regional, national and international projects and/or cooperation partners.
- Please include both experienced and junior researchers in order to ensure a balanced group of applicants.
- Prior to starting the application process for coordinated DFG projects, we recommend that you inform yourself about existing, similar collaborations at other universities, in order to avoid any possible overlap and/or to identify potential cooperation partners.

General information on the application process and support options

- **Applicants are generally only eligible to re-apply if a grant has been concluded**, i.e. when an application for third-party funding which is supported with internal research funding has been provably submitted for a further round by the submission deadline to the provider of the funding. If no application has (yet) been submitted and is not shown on the project display, then written explanation to the vice president / Strukturkommission will be expected as to why the aims of the funding were not achieved.
- In their review of the application (initial acquisition of third-party funding and Postdoc Funding only), the *Strukturkommission* takes the project history of the applying Chair over the past two years into consideration, in order to assess the innovative character of the project concept, as well as the history of funding already applied for by the Chair in the context of seed funding.
- Acceptance of support of the TU Internal Research Funding obliges the applicant to use the granted funds in accordance with the stipulations of the third-party funding application. If revisions are made we request that Dr. Tim Köhler-Ramm (VC 12) be consulted beforehand.
- Acceptance requires that the applicant submit timely reports to VC 12 on the progress of the application process: notify us when the application was submitted to the funder, send the grant letter or rejection letter of the funder, notify us of the reasons why a proposal was not submitted to the funder at the end of the application period.
- In the next round of tenders, rejected grant applications can be revised and re-submitted.

- If the obligations associated with TU-internal research funding are not adhered to, access to further research report may be denied. A two-year ban from the possibility of applying for research funding may be imposed for the following reasons: false statements in the proposal, inappropriate use of funds, without being properly justified the preparatory project does not result in an application being submitted to the funder, Research Promotion Section is not informed as to the success or failure of the third-party funded project applied for, the results of the support instrument are not duly reported.
- By submitting an application, the applicant agrees to comply with the rules of good scientific practice in force at TU Berlin.⁵

Which activities are not supported?

- The preparation of scholarship application is not supported.
- Applications for extension or renewal proposals for ongoing projects are also usually not encouraged.
- Basic equipment (e.g. commonplace laboratory or office supplies) cannot be applied for
- Pure literature searches as the groundwork for a project are not supported; it is assumed that the pertinent literature has been extensively monitored and that the project concept has already reached a certain maturity.
- If it is ascertained that the planned project is too closely related to, or overlaps ongoing collaborative research projects – in case of a planned proposal according to standard DFG procedures – this may constitute a reason to refuse allocation of TU internal seed funding, because DFG does not generally support standard procedure projects when collaborative projects are ongoing at the same facility.

⁵ See <http://www.tu-berlin.de/?id=4511>