



Excellence Programme:

DZHK Junior Research Groups

EX.1-A

- Funding guideline -

1. Funding purpose

The aim of the DZHK Junior Research Groups is to recruit highly qualified and talented young scientists from Germany and abroad for the DZHK as well as to promote outstanding young scientists who are already part of the DZHK and support them on their way to early scientific independence. Excellent research projects are funded which are in line with the strategic direction of the DZHK.

Through the leadership of the Junior Research Group, as well as the fulfilment of teaching duties to a reasonable extent, the Junior Research Group leader is to be given the opportunity to attain tenure.

2. Type and scope of funding

2.1. Eligibility

Scientists holding a doctoral degree (PhD degree or equivalent) are eligible to apply. The applicant must fulfil the following criteria:

- Scientists can apply up to six years after obtaining their doctorate, applicants holding a degree in medicine can submit an application up to eight years after passing the state examination (third part of medical examination or an equivalent first-professional degree).
- The applicant must have worked as a postdoctoral scientist for at least two years at the start of funding.

The period of eligibility can be extended beyond the six or eight years for the following circumstances:

- Periods of family leave (child care or care of relatives) within the eligibility period are considered. When children are born within the eligibility period, i.e. after the date of PhD or state examination, women are credited with 24 months including maternity leave, men with 12 months, as a rule. Additional months are recognised if the actual parental leave was longer than these periods.
- For leaves due to home care of relatives, or due to a long-term illness of the applicant, the eligibility period can be extended according to the documented time of leave taken after the PhD or state examination. The eligibility period can be extended for a maximum of six years.
- For applicants whose research was interrupted due to the pandemic, the eligibility to apply will be extended. An extension of up to 12 months can be applied for informally with justification.

Scientists whose applications to this funding scheme have been previously rejected are allowed to reapply once. Simultaneous funding of two or more ongoing projects through the funding schemes of the DZHK excellence programme is not possible.

2.2. Duration of funding

A DZHK Junior Research Group may be funded for up to six years (three years and following evaluation another three years). A selection panel decides on the second period of funding on the basis of an interim report which is due 2.5 years after the commencement of funding. Upon successful evaluation the DZHK Junior Research Group will be funded for three further years. Otherwise, the fourth year serves as the completion and final funding phase.

2.3. Subject matter of the funding

Up to €275,000 per annum may be requested. €25,000 per annum has to be additionally provided by the hosting institution. These additional funds are not to be provided by funds from the DZHK, but from other sources. The budget comprises personnel funds as well as consumables, investment funds and travel costs. Funding applications for DZHK Junior Research Groups must include financing of the own position. The employing DZHK partner institution decides on the salary group classification. The DZHK only covers direct research costs, and will not reimburse university or research institution overheads.

The DZHK Junior Research Group leader is responsible for personnel and budget, takes on teaching duties of generally four weekly lecturing hours per semester (SWS) and may, if approved by the partner institution, lead PhD students to their doctoral degree.

As a general rule, the DZHK Junior Research Group leader shall work full-time in her/his group. In justified cases, licensed medical doctors may carry out their duties as DZHK Junior Research Group leaders on a part-time basis (max. reduction up to 50 per cent of the regular weekly working time). The possibility to reduce working time due to family work remains unaffected. The approved funds remain available to the DZHK Junior Research Group leader in the case of a reduction in her/his own working time (possible reallocations which become necessary are to be agreed with the funding management department).

If the DZHK Junior Research Group leader is appointed as a professor (W2/W3) at a German university during the period of funding, a completion funding is generally possible. This does not apply to the share of the funds that was granted for financing the group leader's own position. Funds cannot be taken to a new institution if offered a professorship abroad.



2.4. Linkage to a DZHK partner institution

DZHK Junior Research Groups can only be established at DZHK partner institutions. A complete application includes the commitment of a DZHK partner institution to accommodate and integrate the DZHK Junior Research Group at the partner institution. The members of the DZHK Junior Research Group are temporarily employed by the DZHK partner institution for the duration of funding.

The DZHK partner institution provides the necessary basic equipment such as laboratory and office space.

A dual institutional affiliation is only possible at the DZHK partner site where the Junior Research Group will be located. In addition to the affiliation to a DZHK's member institution, the affiliation of the institution from which the research group leader is coming can be used for a transitional period of one year from the beginning of funding.

3. Process

3.1. Application process

Funding applications can be submitted via email at any time to the head office of the DZHK. There is one round of evaluation per year, the deadline can be found on our [web page](#).

The application must contain the following documents:

- Completed application form (EX.2-A)
- Research proposal including curriculum vitae and list of publications (EX.2a-A)
- Declarations (EX.4-A): Employer's agreement, declaration that funds for this grant have not additionally been raised elsewhere

It is strongly recommended to consult the respective [partner site manager](#) before submission of the funding application.

3.2. Evaluation and approval process

- a) The applicant submits the full and complete application documents to the DZHK's head office, which formally reviews the documents.
- b) Applications that meet the formal eligibility criteria are assessed by a selection panel of the DZHK and by at least two independent experts.
The selection panel of the DZHK consists of the board of directors, the partner site speakers and the speaker of the Young DZHK. Members of the selection panel who are not able to personally perform the review may assign a representative to serve as a member of the selection panel.
- c) Based on the external reviews and their own assessment, the selection panel decides which applicants are to be invited to present their project proposal to the panel members.
- d) The shortlisted applicants present their projects to the selection panel, which reaches a decision on the proposals to be funded.



- e) The head office notifies the applicants. The external reviewer's comments will be provided to the applicants after the selection procedure has been completed.
- f) Successful applicants are assigned up to two mentors from the DZHK e.V. to support the junior group leaders and to hold a recapitulation once a year.
- g) The funding management department reviews the project description and AZA/AZK formal application with regard to compliance with public funding legislation and approves the project.
- h) Please allow six months from submission to decision.
- i) The project must commence no later than six months after declaration of funding intent by the DZHK.
- j) The DZHK Publishing Policy has to be considered.

Contact partner

The application and approval process are coordinated by the DZHK head office.
Please contact excellencegrants@dzhk.de for support.