

Guidelines RTG / IRTG proposals (Research Training Group / Internat. Res. Training Group)

25 March 2025

The University of Bayreuth (UBT) welcomes that our researchers submit proposals for Research Training Groups (RTG) or International Research Training Groups (IRTG). In these guidelines, the Research Support Office outlines how to apply for a RTG/IRTG, what aspects you need to consider in all steps of the application, and how we can support you.

RTGs are usually proposed and coordinated by one university. IRTGs are usually jointly proposed and coordinated by two universities, one German, one international. As a rule, around **5-10 researchers** are involved with a RTG, and double the amount with an IRTG, i.e. 5-10 per location.

Funding covers in total **9 years** in both variants, split into two periods of **5 and 4 years** respectively.

The **aim of the funding scheme** is to qualify doctoral candidates within the framework of a focused research programme and a structured qualification and supervision concept (see [DFG Guidelines](#)). Particularly qualified, internationally recruited doctoral candidates will be given the opportunity to conduct their dissertations in a challenging & innovative research environment, and to achieve substantiated research results. Over the entire nine-year funding period, **30-45 doctoral candidates** (IRTG: per location) will be funded.

When applying for an IRTG, please note that **DFG funds can only be applied for to cover the project-specific costs incurred on the German side**. The foreign partner institution is expected to secure the basic funding for its doctoral candidates, for their research work and for research stays at the German partner institution.

Please inform the Research Support Office and the University Governing Board **early on** in case you intend to apply for a RTG/ IRTG (see below).

1. Draft proposal

The establishment of a RTG/IRTG comprises two stages ([DFG overview proposal procedure](#)): Firstly, a **draft proposal** ([DFG draft proposal preparation instructions](#)) is submitted. Following a positive [review of the draft](#), an invitation to submit a full proposal (= establishment proposal) is issued, involving an on-site review.

Funding for [proposal writing workshop](#) can be requested in case of IRTG proposals. If you are planning an IRTG, please get in touch with the relevant [contact person at the DFG Head Office](#) at an early stage.

Please note the following [internal UBT procedure for the RTG/IRTG draft proposal](#):

- Discuss the draft idea with President and Provost.
- Inform VP-F (Vice President Research & Junior Scholars) and Research Support Office about your planned draft proposal; in case of IRTG, please also inform the VP-I (Vice President Internationalisation) and the International Office.
- Inform relevant faculty(ies) and graduate schools/centres about your planned draft proposal.

- You will also be invited to present your draft proposal to the **University Governing Board** at one of their regular meetings (you will be asked to provide documents, e.g. slides): the University Governing Board must approve submission of the draft proposal.
- You will then be asked to present the draft proposal at a **meeting of the Senate**; the Senate must approve submission of the draft proposal.

If applicable, please also consider early on the ["Joint Doctoral Degree / Joint PhD / Cotutelle Process"](#)

Content of draft proposal:

- Maximum 15 pages for RTG and 20 pages for IRTG in German or English (only English for IRTG).
- Presentation of the participating researchers, the doctoral cohorts (time and financial planning over the nine years; in addition to DFG-funded doctoral researchers, doctoral researchers funded from other sources should also be involved), research programme with central theme, qualification and supervision concept, and university environment (for IRTG also environment of the foreign partner).
- When presenting the qualification and supervision concept, emphasise innovative measures that go beyond the programmes offered by our graduate schools. An excellent professional supervision concept, clear allocation of roles for all stakeholders, transparent organisational structures and quality management as well as solid academic support training (which, however, should not infringe on the timeframe of a 3-4 year doctorate) are expected.
- Please also note that guest researchers are expected to be involved in a RTG. In the case of IRTG, longer-term research stays (six to twelve months in total) of the doctoral candidates at the respective partner institution are expected.
- When describing the university environment, it should be made clear how the RTG matches the existing research environment, e.g. complements existing collaborative research projects, and which structural innovations for the university will result from the RTG/IRTG.
- When preparing a RTG/IRTG draft, several central service units at UBT are involved, e.g. the Junior Scholar Office (WiN-UBT), the Gender Equality Service Centre, and the International Office. Staff from these units will contribute to the development of the draft proposal. At the Research Support Office we coordinate this joint effort and liaise with the relevant service units.
- Submission of draft proposal by the spokesperson, together with a complete list of all CVs of the participating researchers ([DFG CV template](#)) via the DFG's elan portal. Please bear in mind that all participating researchers must be entered manually in the elan portal (time factor!). A summary in both English and German is also required in elan.
- The draft proposal does not require the signature of the University Governing Board. Only the DFG's confirmation of receipt ('Quittung') is signed by both the spokesperson and the university management.

2. Establishment proposal

If the draft proposal is approved, you will be invited to submit a full proposal, also called **establishment proposal** ([DFG establishment proposal preparation instructions](#)).

Please note the following [internal UBT procedure for the establishment proposal](#):

- You will be invited to a meeting of the **University Governing Board** to present the establishment proposal in detail, e.g. by means of slides, and to consult with the University Governing Board. The Chancellor must approve of the proposal budget.
- The University Governing Board or VP-F will then inform the **Senate** on the establishment proposal.

During this phase, please discuss with the relevant divisions and faculties the **core support such as office premises, laboratory space, office and lab equipment, and use of instrumentation**. Please also clarify the **university's support** with President and Provost, if needed. At the Research Support Office we will help you with this. It is expected, for example, that the employment of all participating scientists is secured for the first funding phase.

Content of establishment proposal:

- Maximum 55 pages for RTG and 65 pages for IRTG.
- Development of the draft proposal based on the points described above, taking into account the feedback from both the DFG review of the draft proposal and your consultations at UBT with the University Governing Board and Senate.
- A special chapter is the 2-page presentation of the 'profile' of the RTG/IRTG, in which the innovative research programme and the excellent qualification concept are explained. In the case of IRTGs, the added value of the collaboration with the foreign partner must be clearly stated.
- The chapter 'research programme' should contain, besides a detailed presentation of the overarching research idea, a list of concrete dissertation projects.
- Other sub-chapters within the 'research programme' will look at the handling of research data and the relevance of gender and diversity in the proposed research. The Research Support Office coordinates the content development of these sections with the help of the respective UBT service units.
- Further key chapters are the description of the qualification and supervision concept. Both must be developed in close consultation with the Junior Scholar Office (WiN-UBT) and with the UBT service units responsible for aspects such as equal opportunities and quality management. Here, too, the Research Support Office coordinates.
- Submission of establishment proposal by the spokesperson together with a complete list of all CVs of the participating researchers ([DFG CV template](#)) via the DFG's elan portal. In case of IRTG the submission needs to include a declaration of cooperation from the foreign partner. The proposal does not require the signature of the University Governing Board; only the DFG's confirmation of receipt ('Quittung') is signed by both the spokesperson and the University Governing Board.
- A copy of the full proposal must be sent to the responsible state ministry to give them the opportunity to comment.

3. Review for establishment of RTG/IRTG

As soon as the establishment proposal has been submitted, preparations are made for an on-site review (= establishment review) of the RTG/IRTG. The DFG has detailed guidelines regarding the organisation of this review at the location of the coordinating university, see Section IV of the [DFG establishment proposal preparation instructions](#). In addition to the reviewers and one member of the Grants Committee ('DFG rapporteur'), a person from the relevant state ministry may also take part in the evaluation.

The review is generally a one-day event; the programme schedule is determined in consultation between the spokesperson and the DFG Head Office. To prepare for the review, please involve the University Governing Board and the Research Support Office early on and plan the participation of appropriate persons for on-site support. This also applies to travel dates in the run-up to the review.

The review will kick off with an internal meeting of the review panel, which is followed by presentations of the speakers and the University Governing Board. Please consider backup slides for clarification during the discussion. During a poster session, early career researchers and the supporting service centres of the university should be present with posters. Following the poster session, the review panel will consult and formulate a recommendation for the DFG Grants Committee for Research Training Groups. At the end of the day, the spokesperson will be unofficially notified of this recommendation.

For preparation of the review, we recommend in-depth research on the members of the review panel (academic background, methodological approach, publications, personality, etc.). The [DFG guidelines for reviewing RTG/IRTG](#), which are addressed to the reviewers, are also informative.

When preparing, please also consider important accompanying processes such as booking rooms (plenary sessions, breaks, poster sessions, consultation rooms, technology & IT), hotel bookings, transfers for the review panel and catering during breaks.

The final decision on funding is the responsibility of the DFG's Grants Committee on Research Training Groups, which meets every six months.

Your contact for all questions relating to GRGs/IRTGs:

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