FWF Austrian Science Fund

In accordance with its <u>Funding Guidelines</u> dated January 1, 2022 (as amended), the FWF has issued the following Application Guidelines for the program

doc.funds.connect

for Cooperative Doctoral Education Between Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities

Vienna, valid from December 11, 2023

Discovering
what
matters.

Preamble

Science and research, tertiary education, and research-generated innovations are key elements in ensuring a future-oriented Austria. The quality and excellence produced at and by Austrian universities and universities of applied sciences in the fields of research and teaching are essential components in achieving this ambitious goal.

With the aim of strengthening these institutions' profiles and exploiting synergies, the federal government established a program for the 2020–2024 period to provide funding for cooperative doctorates between universities as defined by the Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz* 2002, UG) and universities of applied sciences (UAS) as defined by the University of Applied Sciences Act (*Fachhochschulgesetz*, FHG). By interlinking basic research and applied research, the programs' objective is to establish application-oriented basic research.

Both as a personnel development measure for academic staff, especially at universities of applied sciences, and as a measure to encourage closer cooperation between universities and UAS, this call for proposals will fund joint projects between public universities and UAS to strengthen the already successful cooperation in doctoral education between these institutions. The funded cooperative projects will be jointly developed and implemented by the higher education partners, and each institution will contribute its specific expertise and unique aspects of its university culture to jointly ensure the quality of the doctoral education and training offered by the program.

Contents

1   General Information

This document has been prepared in German and English for your convenience. In the event of a dispute, the German version shall prevail.

1.1   Program objective

The main objective of the doc.funds.connect program is to fund excellent scientific/scholarly or arts-based research education and training of doctoral candidates in cooperative doctoral programs between universities as defined by the University Act 2002 and universities of applied sciences (UAS) as defined by the University of Applied Sciences Act. To accomplish this aim, universities and UAS will establish or expand jointly developed and organized doctoral programs based on international standards. The doc.funds.connect program endeavors to integrate both academic-theoretical education and practical training as well as basic research and applied research with the aim of establishing application-oriented basic research. The shared use of the infrastructure of universities and UAS contributes to the establishment of a stimulating research environment for excellent young researchers, further increasing the attractiveness of Austria as a research location.

At the same time, however, the funding program is also intended to support the development of academic staff at UAS in accordance with the Universities of Applied Sciences Act and to link different research cultures. In the long term, doc.funds.connect should contribute to the creation of sustainable cooperative education, training, and research structures and promote cooperation between UAS and universities in general. The program is also intended to help universities and universities of applied sciences further strengthen their research activities and scientific/scholarly or arts-based research priorities.

The doc.funds.connect program is designed as a pilot program. The program will also strive to serve as a role model with regard to improving the quality of cooperative doctoral education and training.

1.2   Definition of terms

Explanations of the terms used in the Application Guidelines can be found in the Definition of Terms (PROFI mode). In addition, some terms specific to doc.funds.connect are explained below:

Term	Definition
Research institution	Austrian university according to pursuant to the Universities Act (UG) or UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (FHG)
Faculty member	Scientific or arts-based researcher participating in the application, doctoral student supervisor, and person

Term	Definition
	involved in carrying out the FWF-funded doc.funds.connect project; equivalent to "consortium member" in the Definition of Terms linked above.
Faculty	The group of all faculty members; equivalent to "consortium" in the Definition of Terms linked above.
Doctoral candidate	A person enrolled in and actively pursuing doctoral studies at an Austrian university as defined by the Universities Act

1.3 Submission

The deadline for submission (i.e. approval of the application for submission by the research institution) is **March 5, 2024 (2:00 pm local time Vienna).** All proposals must be submitted online using the elane digital application portal. Project funding is administered through the research institutions (PROFI); this means the application must be approved for submission by both the coordinator and the respective research institution (= lead research institution). [1] All forms required for the application must be completed online; other application documents (see section 2.1) must be uploaded in full before the application can be approved for submission by the lead research institution. Applications submitted after the deadline will be returned without review, regardless of the circumstances. For additional information, please see the elane user manual.

1.4 Who is eligible to apply?

All **Austrian universities as defined by the Universities Act** and all **Austrian universities of applied sciences as defined by the Universities of Applied Sciences Act** are eligible to apply.[2]

The project must be carried out in Austria and under the auspices of the applying research institution (= lead research institution). The application is submitted by the research institution where the coordinator works. Grant agreements are concluded exclusively with the lead research institution.

The lead research institution appoints the coordinator to carry out the project. 100% of the coordinator's work must be in Austria at the time of application and for the entire duration of the planned project. Since this is a cooperation project between universities pursuant to the Universities Act and UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act, the project may be co-headed by two coordinators. The second coordinator is not appointed by the lead research institution, but by (one of) the partner research institutions.

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[1]   Approval for submission by the research institution may be waived by the research institution if it has authorized the coordinator to approve it themselves.

[2]   Research institutions must be registered in the FWF's research institution portal.

The doctoral program for which funding is requested must involve **at least five** faculty members who are active in research or arts-based research (including the coordinator), with **40% of the members from the underrepresented gender**. An explanation must be provided if this percentage is lower than 40%. In addition, a description should be provided of the efforts made to increase the proportion of the underrepresented gender. In the context of the evaluation procedure, the composition of the team is defined as a decision-making criterion.

If the project will include faculty members who do not work 100% in Austria, the following guidelines apply: The faculty member in question must be employed at the Austrian research institution at the time of application and for the entire duration of the project. The extent of employment at the Austrian research institution not funded by the FWF must be at least 25%. Before submitting an application, researchers are required to submit evidence of such employment and a brief description of the project, including a plan for its execution, information on the researcher's presence on site, rules of representation, etc., for approval by the FWF.

1.4.1 Can multiple applications be submitted simultaneously?

Researchers who are not yet involved in an ongoing doc.funds.connect project as a faculty member can participate in **a maximum of two** doc.funds.connect **applications** per call.

Please note that **for faculty members,** participation in ongoing/approved doc.funds.connect projects is **limited to a maximum of two ongoing** doc.funds.connect **projects**. Faculty members involved in two ongoing doc.funds.connect projects may participate in a doc.funds.connect application *no earlier than 12 months before the end* of one of the two ongoing projects.

The following applies to both the proposal phase and the implementation phase of the project:

- A researcher may serve as **coordinator** in **no more than one doc.funds.connect project**.

- **The coordinator** of a doc.funds.connect project **may not simultaneously be the coordinator, Director of Research (DOR), or spokesperson** of an ongoing project or pending proposal for **any of the following programs**: Clusters of Excellence (COE), Emerging Fields, Special Research Areas, #ConnectingMinds, Research Groups, Young Independent Research Groups, Doctoral Programs (DK),[3] doc.funds

- **The reverse also applies:** The person named as coordinator, Director of Research, or spokesperson in an ongoing project or pending proposal for any of the above-mentioned programs is not eligible to apply as a coordinator in the doc.funds.connect program.

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[3] This does not apply to FWF Doctoral Programs if the scheduled duration has already ended.

- Other members of a COE (key researchers, associate researchers, and BOD members who are not the DOR) may be named as coordinator of a doc.funds or doc.funds.connect application or serve as coordinator in an ongoing Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project.

No additional funding may be requested from the doc.funds.connect program for **ongoing FWF-funded Doctoral Programs (DK)**, **doc.funds**, or **doc.funds.connect projects**. An application for these projects can only be submitted to the doc.funds.connect program if the scheduled duration of the FWF-funded Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project ends on or before the deadline for doc.funds.connect applications **(March 5, 2024)**.

Proposals that are **thematically related to ongoing Doctoral Programs, doc.funds or doc.funds.connect projects** must also meet **all** of the following requirements in addition to those defined in the program-specific application guidelines:

- Research program: The research questions and research work in the proposal are clearly different from those of the ongoing Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project.

- Faculty: The majority (at least 50%) of the faculty is not made up of faculty members involved in the current Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project. If the total number of faculty is higher than in the current Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project, grounds for this increase must be provided.

The difference to the ongoing project must be explicitly and clearly explained in the application. In addition, the cover letter to the FWF must state that all of the above requirements have been met. If only one of the above-mentioned requirements is not met or if there are reasonable doubts about the difference between the proposal and the existing project, the application can be returned without review.

1.5 What types of projects can be funded?

Funding may be requested for proposals for **establishing or facilitating structured doctoral programs** which are submitted and supported jointly by at least one **university pursuant to the Universities Act** and at least one **UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act**. The research project, which must be clearly defined, convincingly described in terms of objectives and methods, and **limited in time (no more than 48 months)**, must aim to integrate basic research and applied research and establish application-oriented basic research. The planned project should be designed in such a way that excellent dissertations based on state-of-the-art international research can be expected.

The prerequisite for submission is a **structured doctoral program defined jointly** by the university pursuant to the Universities Act and the UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act, which meets the **following requirements**.

1.5.1 General framework

The doc.funds.connect program provides funding for cooperative projects between universities pursuant to the Universities Act and UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act for the purpose of establishing or expanding a structured doctoral program. Applications **must be submitted** and, if approved, implemented **jointly** by the research institutions, where each research institution will contribute its specific expertise and unique aspects of its university culture and jointly ensure the quality of the doctoral education and training offered by the program.

The application should include a description of the inter-university cooperation and a plan for implementing the joint doctoral education and training program. It should also address how it will be ensured that the doctoral candidates, although working in different locations, will have the opportunity to be in contact and interact with the faculty members or doctoral candidates in the other location(s), both virtually and in person.

Doctoral candidates should be **supervised** jointly, i.e., **by research staff of the universities and the UAS**. Doctoral candidates should preferably be employed at the research institution with the best conditions for the success of the dissertation based on the subject of the research project. However, it must also be ensured that there is a **balanced ratio of employment** between the university and the UAS. The number of doctoral program courses held at the universities and at the UAS should be equally balanced. Both should be specified in a cooperation agreement.
The academic degree (PhD), however, will be conferred by the participating university.

The following requirements apply for the structured doctoral program:

1.5.2 Structured doctoral program

Structured doctoral programs are embedded in a focused and consistent research framework. They also feature procedures or structures and commitments that ensure the quality of the research, as well as optimal and appropriate academic or arts-based research support for doctoral candidates.

The following specific minimum structuring standards apply: Supervision confirmation; dissertation agreement; progress reports; supervision and evaluation of dissertations performed by different people (if compliant with study law regulations); subject-specific education and supporting measures (transferable skills, etc.); supervision teams rather than exclusively individual supervision; supervisor development; mobility options, and specific funding models for doctoral candidates.

In particular, contexts must be created for doctoral candidates and supervisors in which mentoring and appropriate discussion can take place as part of a peer culture (see section 2.2.3.4). These contexts should have their own institutional structure and be clearly located in the research organization (at the university or UAS, faculty, or departmental level).

Doctoral candidates are to be regarded by the university and UAS as early-stage researchers or early-stage artists.[4]

The aim is to ensure independent and high-quality scientific or arts-based research by the doctoral candidates, to integrate them into the institutional research activities of the university or UAS, and to guide them to completion of their degree through the active mentoring/supervision of one supervisor from the university and one supervisor from the UAS.

1.6   What are the requirements for faculty members?

1.6.1   General requirements

__All__ of the **faculty members** involved in the proposal must have documented **experience** over the past five years in **supervising/co-supervising doctoral students or assessing dissertations**, possess **excellent research qualifications** and/or meet international standards for arts-based research and demonstrate a connection to the development and exploration of the arts.

The **publication records of __each__ faculty member over the last five years** must be internationally visible and commensurate with the expected career path in their field. The following criteria apply for the assessment of an applicant's publication record and initiation of the review process:

- **Quality assurance:** The primary publications for evaluating the publication record are those that have been subjected to a quality assurance procedure in line with high international standards (peer review or an equivalent procedure; peer review is expected in the natural and life sciences). The journals must usually be listed in the Web of Science, Scopus, or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). In the case of journals that are not listed in these databases, or in the case of monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, or other publication types, the respective faculty member must provide a link to the publisher's website, describing the quality assurance procedure applied. If no description should be available, it is the faculty member's responsibility to provide evidence that the publication has been subject to an appropriate quality assurance procedure.

  For proposals dealing with arts-based research, faculty members who are active in the field of arts-based research must have excellent qualifications according to international standards and must have a connection to the development of the arts. This qualification is to be documented based on artistic, scholarly, and/or arts-based achievements of the last

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[4]   Exceptions apply for doctoral candidates with a degree which officially allows them to pursue a doctoral degree, but which was granted over four years ago because they were for example, working in their field for several years.

five years commensurate with the faculty member's career path and which demonstrate their international visibility.

- **International visibility:** Most of the faculty member's publications/work lists must have a wider than national reach. In the natural sciences, life sciences, and social sciences, most of the publications listed must be in English.

- **Number/scope and quality** of the faculty member's publications/work lists must be commensurate with the discipline and expected career progression. At least two publications must be quality-assured and internationally visible publications with a substantial and independent contribution on the part of the respective faculty member. At least one publication with first, last, or corresponding authorship is required, with the exception of publications in journals (or disciplines) that rank authors alphabetically. If any such publications are included in the required document *PI_publication.pdf* (see section 2.2.5.1), the respective faculty member's contribution must be specified.

The *Program-specific data* form must include the persistent digital identifier ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) of **each** faculty member.

The **experience in (co-)supervision of doctoral candidates or experience in assessing dissertations** of **all faculty members** involved in the proposal must be presented in the additional file *Supervision_list.pdf*, an overview of all doctoral students (co-)supervised by faculty members in the last five years (Feb. 2019–Feb. 2024).

If there is any uncertainty about general application requirements or about accounting for career interruptions (see sections 1.6.3 and 1.6.4), the FWF recommends that the coordinator or faculty member contact the FWF Office or the FWF Equal Opportunities in Research Funding unit in good time before submitting the application to confirm that all requirements are met and that any career interruptions can be accounted for. In cases of doubt, the appropriate decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide on applicants' eligibility.

1.6.2 Equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion

The FWF Strategy for Gender Equality and Diversity of Researchers applies. This means that breaks or delays in faculty members' research careers that have led to publication gaps, unorthodox career paths, or limited international research experience can be taken into consideration. For further details on accounting for career breaks, please refer to the information sheet on career interruptions.

1.6.3 Consideration of career breaks

The FWF will take justified, documentable career breaks (e.g. due to pregnancy, childcare,[5] caregiving obligations,[6] military or civilian service, flight, and asylum) into consideration when assessing eligibility to apply.

1.6.4 Inclusion of the disabled and chronically ill

The FWF will also take any exceptions to and interruptions of typical career paths due to disability and/or long-term illness into consideration when determining whether an applicant meets the application requirements.

1.6.5 Data protection notice

When assessing eligibility, all personal data provided to the FWF by a faculty member on a voluntary basis that relates to the information provided in sections 1.6.3 and 1.6.4 shall be taken into consideration exclusively to their benefit (to compensate for disadvantages). Relevant information (without sensitive or personal data) can be included in an individual's academic CV, making it available to the reviewers. A general explanation, including the duration of the interruption or delay, is sufficient. Please complete the required form and give your explicit consent to data processing on the last page.

If you wish to submit further supporting documents in addition to those listed in the form, please submit them directly to the FWF office. These will not be visible to your research institution. This information is only used to check the application requirements and is not made available to reviewers.

1.7 What types of funding can be requested?

Project-specific costs are eligible for funding. These include personnel and non-personnel costs that are necessary for carrying out the project and that go beyond the resources provided by the infrastructure of the research institution(s). The FWF does not finance the infrastructure or basic equipment of research institutions.

When requesting funding, the regulations of the respective research institution and the FWF guidelines apply. The requested funds must be summarized in the elane *Cost breakdown* form, and justification must be provided in Appendix A. Please note that exaggerated cost projections may be grounds for rejection, even if a proposal is otherwise excellent.

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[5] Childcare includes parental leave periods, if applicable.

[6] Immediate family members and/or persons living in the same household: Spouses, registered partners, parents, children, adopted, step, and foster children, siblings, parents-in-law, and children-in-law.

Multiple funding is not permitted (see [FWF Funding Guidelines](#)). Any other support or grants for the project that have been requested or awarded by the FWF or other funding bodies must be disclosed on the *Application form*.

2   Application

2.1   Sections of the application

For an application to be complete, it must contain the following parts:

2.1.1   Academic abstract

The academic abstract must be **written in English**, may not exceed 3,000 characters (including spaces, no formulas or special characters) and will be used to inform potential reviewers about the project. The abstract must use the English headings provided below.
- Wider research context / theoretical framework
- Hypotheses / research questions / objectives
- Approach/Methods
- Faculty
- Doctoral program
- Added value

Where alternatives are indicated between slashes, please select the alternative that applies to your project.

2.1.2   Project description

- Title page: Project title, participating research institution(s) (address and head of institution), and name and institute address (including information on the program coordinator)
- Table of contents
- Project description on **max. 30** (not including the title page and table of contents) consecutively numbered pages, including a list of abbreviations, headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.
  The **following contents** are expected:
  - Description of research framework (max. 9 pages)
  - Description of faculty (max. 4 pages)
  - Description of education program (max. 9 pages)
  - Organizational structure (max. 4 pages)
  - Added value generated by the program (max. 4 pages)

The project description must also include Annexes 1–3 and Annex 4 if applicable, on additional pages:

- Annex 1: List of literature cited in the application (*References*) on no more than 5 pages

- Annex 2: Details of the lead research institution and any partner research institutions and a plausible justification of the funding requested

- Annex 3: Academic CVs and description of previous research achievements for all faculty members involved in the application (no more than 3 pages per CV)

- Annex 4 (optional): Collaboration letters from national and international cooperation partners (max. 1 page per letter)

The project description, including these annexes, must be uploaded as a single file titled *Proposal.pdf*. The FWF will send this document to the reviewers.

2.1.3   Additional documents

- Required:

  - Two publications written by each faculty member must be named, documenting fulfillment of the general application requirements (publication record, see section 1.6.1); compiled in *one* PDF file entitled *PI_Publication_list.pdf*

  - Publication lists for internal FWF use to assess eligibility to apply and to check for conflicts of interest with potential reviewers (*Publication_lists.pdf)*

  - Description of the planned dissertation projects on no more than one page and in a structured form addressing hypotheses/aims, approach/methods, time frame, and participating faculty. Please note that the number of dissertation projects described must correspond with the number of doctoral candidate positions requested (*Dissertation_topics.pdf*).[7]
    Please note: If the description of the dissertation projects is included in the 30-page project description, this file may be omitted. This should be briefly noted in the cover letter to the FWF (see below).

  - Table with an overview of all doctoral candidates (co-)supervised and all dissertations assessed by the faculty members over the last 5 years (February 2019–February 2024), listed separately for each faculty member and including the following information: name of supervisor/co-supervisor, name of doctoral candidate, title/topic of dissertation, start date, and date of doctoral degree or "ongoing" *(Supervision_list.pdf)*

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[7]   If additional doctoral student positions are funded by the research institution(s), the proposed dissertation projects may also be attached.

- Where applicable:

  - Additional files in the case of resubmission: If the application is a revised version of a previously rejected application (see section 2.4), a response to the reviews (*Revision.pdf*) and an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application (*Overview_Revision.pdf*) must be uploaded.

  - A cover letter *(Cover_letter.pdf)* should accompany the application to the FWF:
    - In the case of an ongoing, thematically related FWF-funded Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project, or if two or more members of the faculty are involved in an FWF-funded Doctoral Program, doc.funds, or doc.funds.connect project, the difference between the FWF-funded projects and the proposed doctoral program must be presented and clearly explained, and it must be demonstrated that the criteria described in section 1.4.1 are met.
    - If the proposed dissertation projects have been described in the max. 30-page project description and no additional *Dissertation_topics.pdf* file is being uploaded

  - List of max. 3 researchers (*Negative_list.pdf*) – including, if applicable, reviewers of a previously rejected proposal – who are to be excluded from the review process (see section 3.2), with a brief justification

All additional documents must be uploaded individually.

Any additional documents (e.g., recommendations for potential reviewers, letters of recommendation, forthcoming publications) will not be considered in further stages of the application process.

2.1.4   Forms to be completed

- Required: *Research institution assignment* form, *Contact* form, *Application* form, *Cost breakdown* form, *Program-specific data* form, *Academic abstract* form, and *Co-authors* form
- Where applicable: *Other cooperation* form

2.2   Application content and form

2.2.1   Application language

To allow applications to be reviewed by international experts, **all** applications must be submitted in English.

2.2.2 Scope and formatting requirements

The continuous text in the project description, Annexes 1–3, and the additional files specified in section 2.1.3 where applicable, must be written, without exception, in 11 pt. font with 1.5 line (15–20 pt.) spacing and at least 2 cm margins. A standard, easily legible font must be used for the body text. These form requirements (font type and size, line spacing, and margins) also apply for all additional files, except for documents not prepared by the applicants, such as collaboration letters. The file must be created in such a way that it is searchable in PDF format and the formatting can be reviewed.

The structure provided in section 2.2.3 and all upper limits (e.g., number of pages, attachments, etc.) must be strictly complied with, without exception.

Citations in the text and the list of works cited (*References*) in the application must be in line with the conventions of the respective discipline, preferably according to a widely used style guide (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, APA Publication Manual). Faculty members are free to choose the citation conventions or style guide they prefer, but they must apply them consistently throughout the application. If available, a DOI address (DOI = Digital Object Identifier) or another persistent identifier should be used for the literature cited.

2.2.3 Project description

In the project description, the research institution must indicate how the requested budget will be used over a period of up to four years: What topics or research questions defined jointly by the university according to Universities Act and the UAS according to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act will the doctoral candidates work on? How will the planned research efforts fit in with the existing research? To what extent will those efforts serve to strengthen the program's research basis, make a long-term contribution to the cooperation between the research institutions, and promote the integration of basic research and application-oriented research? The basis for the funding application is the planned structured doctoral program, the research conducted in the program, its education and training structures, and the added value of the planned cooperation arrangement. All of those elements will be subjected to review and must therefore be described in the application.

The project description (**no more than 30 pages**) must include the following contents:

2.2.3.1 Research framework (max. 9 pages)

The existing doctoral program must be embedded in a focused, consistent research framework on par with the highest international standards. The following aspects must be addressed:

- Description of excellent research according to international standards conducted at the participating research institutions (university pursuant to the Universities Act and UAS

pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act) with a (brief!) reference to the state of the art in international research.

- Description of the research framework that serves as the basis for the planned doctoral program. This framework must be focused, consistent, and developed jointly by the university pursuant to the Universities Act and UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act.

- Description of the research topics/questions to be addressed by the doctoral candidates at both the university pursuant to the Universities Act and UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act; a structured presentation of the planned dissertation projects (max. one page per project) must be provided in the additional document *Dissertation_topics.pdf*.

- Explanation of the scientific or arts-based research advances expected to result from the planned project, its innovative potential, and the significance of the resulting research outcomes for the international scientific community.

- Presentation of procedures or structures already in place to ensure the quality of research (e.g., internal peer review, mentoring, academic integrity standards, etc.) as well as the involvement of doctoral candidates in the existing research framework

- All potential ethical, safety-related, or regulatory aspects[8] of the planned research project and how researchers plan to address these aspects must be described briefly in a separate section. This aspect should be addressed briefly in the text even if the faculty members believe the project does not raise any such issues.

- All potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects[9] in the planned research project as well as the planned implementation of these research questions must be described in a separate section. This point should be briefly addressed in the text even if, in the opinion of the faculty members, these aspects do not apply to the project.

2.2.3.2 Faculty (max. 4 pages)

The proposed doctoral program must be run by a team of at least five active researchers or arts-based researchers. **All researchers** (i.e., faculty members) **involved in the proposal** must have outstanding academic qualifications that **meet or exceed** the criteria in section 1.6.1 as well as experience in (co-)supervising doctoral candidates or assessing dissertations. A description of the selection criteria for admitting new researchers is also required.

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8   For instance, the European Commission's Ethics for Researchers or The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity can serve as a guide here.

9   Positioning and thoughts on the research approaches in the planned for the project in terms of sex-specific and gender-related aspects could include : Is the research approach likely to produce sex-specific and gender-related findings? If so, what findings? How and where are these integrated into the research approach? (For information on determining the relevance of sex-specific and gender-related issues please see the FWF website.)

The quality and composition of the faculty should be presented as follows:

- Brief description of the academic or arts-based profiles of the faculty members involved in the proposal and their experience in (co-)supervising doctoral candidates
An overview of all doctoral candidates (co-)supervised by the faculty members and/or all dissertations assessed over the last five years (Feb. 2019-Feb. 2024) must be provided in the required file S*upervision_list.pdf*.

- Proportion of the researchers from the underrepresented gender; if the percentage is less than 40%, reasons must be provided.

- The selection criteria for the admission of researchers into the doctoral program

2.2.3.3 Existing education and training program (max. 9 pages)

In addition to outstanding research, the existing doctoral program is expected to feature a high-quality education and training program based on international standards (see e.g. The Seven Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training, Charter & Code for Researchers | EURAXESS, Salzburg I and II Recommendations), which fulfills the requirements of a structured doctoral program as specified in sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2. Ideally, the education and training program should be tailored to the research conducted in the doctoral program (i.e., education through research).

The structure of the education and training program as well as procedures for ensuring the quality of academic supervision of the doctoral candidates must be described in the proposal. In particular, it must address sections 2.2.3.3.1 through 2.2.3.3.4:

2.2.3.3.1 Program content

- Subject-specific education (content and workload, e.g., number of (required) courses, ECTS credits, etc.)

- Existing opportunities for the acquisition of additional qualifications (transferable skills), for interdisciplinary collaboration, and for the exchange of ideas within the doctoral program (among doctoral candidates, and between candidates and the participating researchers or arts-based researchers at the university and the UAS, e.g., journal clubs, retreats, PhD seminars, lab rotations, etc.) and with the business community, public administration, the arts, culture, NGOs, etc.

2.2.3.3.2 Selection of doctoral candidates

- Positions advertised internationally, transparent application and selection procedures

- Process of matching doctoral candidates to supervisors

2.2.3.3.3 Supervision (including monitoring) of doctoral candidates and their integration into the research framework

- Rules on supervision, mentoring, and assessment (dissertation agreements, regular progress reports, team supervision instead of exclusively individual supervision, etc.) as well as conflict resolution mechanisms

- Support for international networking and promotion of mobility, including opportunities for research stays abroad (over several months), budget allocations for conference attendance, lab visits, invitations to visiting researchers, organization of PhD conferences, etc.

- Working conditions (including infrastructure) for doctoral candidates: Description of employment contracts (duration, extent of employment, any options for extension) and funding models for doctoral candidates, available infrastructure, and any special equipment or facilities at the research institution

2.2.3.3.4 Criteria and assessment procedures to ensure a top-notch international doctoral degree

- Requirements for completion (both formal and content-related)

- Assessment procedures (with involvement of external researchers; supervision and evaluation performed by different people, if compliant with study-law regulations)

2.2.3.4 Organizational structure (max. 4 pages)

The participating research institutions (university pursuant to the Universities Act and the UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act) must commit to providing all the necessary infrastructure (equipment, workstations, workspace, supplies, etc.) for at least the four-year funding period and ensure that the doctoral program is integrated into the research institution's regular activities. These contributions on the part of the research institutions are an integral part of the proposed project.

The following information must be provided:

- Institutional organization and structures as well as integration of the doctoral program into the research institutions: Organizational structure and responsibilities (co-heads are possible), faculty members' rights and obligations to participation, decision-making structures and bodies (equal representation), quality assurance and internal control, incorporation into the research organization, integration in the teaching system of the university and the UAS

- Facilities and equipment already available (rooms/space, equipment, supplies, etc.) at the participating research institution(s), and infrastructure for doctoral candidates

- Contribution of the research institutions, for instance, providing rooms and workstations, supplies, infrastructure, funding if applicable

It is recommended to define the provisions regulating the division of responsibilities, the decision-making process, and the handling of financial, personnel, and organizational aspects in the statutes. The statutes are to be regarded as a contractual agreement between all the faculty members and the coordinator and, if the project is approved, can be included as part of the agreement with the FWF.

2.2.3.5 Added value (max. 4 pages)

The proposed doctoral program must differ from general doctoral education and training programs in the relevant discipline and be more than just a consolidation of researchers or arts-based researchers at universities pursuant to the Universities Act and UAS pursuant to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act.

The application must address the following:
- The unique selling points of the proposed doctoral program (in terms of research and education) and differences from general doctoral education
- The specific added value for doctoral candidates, the faculty, and the participating research institutions
- The added value for science arising from the combination of basic research and applied research
- The contribution to strengthening the program's research basis at the participating research institutions and to strengthening research transfer activities
- The contribution towards strengthening the cooperation between UAS and universities in general
- The contribution towards promoting the personnel development of research staff at UAS
- Measures for ensuring a long-term relationship between the participating research institutions during and after the funding period

2.2.4 Annexes to the project description

Annexes are not included in the maximum page limit for the project description and <u>must be attached to the project description in the specified order</u>.

2.2.4.1 Annex 1: List of references

List of literature cited in the application (*References*) on no more than 5 pages

2.2.4.2 Annex 2: Information on and justification of requested funding

A description of financial aspects using the template in [Appendix A](#) is to be appended to the project description as Annex 2.

- Information on the lead research institution and any partner research institutions if applicable:
  - Existing project participants (not financed by FWF project funds; usually the academic project staff supporting the project at the research institutions)
  - Existing infrastructure available to the project

- Information on the funding requested
  - Concise research-related or arts-based research-related justifications for the number of doctoral positions applied for (with reference to the planned dissertation projects where applicable) and a description of the research institutions where they will be employed
  - Concise justifications for and planned use of requested funding for education and training

2.2.4.3 Annex 3: CVs and description of previous research achievements

The academic CVs and research achievements must be attached for all faculty members and may not exceed 3 pages per faculty member.

Required contents for academic CVs

- *Personal details:* Personal data (name, researcher unique identifier(s) such as ORCID, research ID, etc., no photos), address of research institution, and relevant websites
  Please also provide a publicly accessible link to a list of all the researcher's publications.

- *Education:* List of academic milestones

- *Position(s)*: List of academically relevant positions (with the extent of employment in the case of part-time employment)

- *Career breaks* (if any): List of career breaks or delays (see also sections [1.6.2](#) and [1.6.3](#))

- *Net research experience* (optional): The length of time (in years and months) that has actually been used in net total for research – calculated in such a way as to be equivalent to full-time employment – and broken down into the time before and after completion of the applicant's doctoral degree. This is intended to make it easier for the reviewers to assess the researcher's qualifications in terms of academic age.

- *Research interests*: Description of the main areas of research and the most important research results achieved to date

- *Academic publications*: List of no more than ten of the most important published or accepted academic or arts-based research publications (journal articles, monographs, edited volumes, contributions to edited volumes, proceedings, etc.) or works; for each publication, either a DOI address or another persistent identifier should be indicated, if available. Pursuant to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, journal-based metrics such as journal impact factors, Article Influence Scores, or the h-index should not be included.

- *Additional research achievements:* List of no more than ten of the most important research or arts-based research achievements apart from research or arts-based research publications, including achievements such as freely accessible research data including software and codes, awards, contributions to conferences, keynote lectures, significant research projects, for example peer review-approved projects such as CD Laboratories, EU projects, COMET projects, etc.), peer review activities, promotion of junior researchers, exhibitions, interactions with society (including citizen science or transdisciplinary activities), science communication, knowledge transfer, licenses, or patents. If available, a persistent identifier or link to the respective research achievement must be provided.

2.2.4.4 Annex 4: Collaboration letters

Optional: Collaboration letters (each no more than 1 page) from national and international cooperation partners who are convincingly stated in the project description as being essential for the implementation of the project

2.2.5 Required additional documents

2.2.5.1 Publication output

The following two separate uploads are required:

- *PI_publication.pdf:* Two publications written by each faculty member must be named, documenting fulfillment of the general application requirements (see template *PI_publication*), compiled into *one* PDF file. The FWF will determine eligibility to apply based on these publications.

- *Publication_lists.pdf:* A list of all research publications[10] over the last five years (categorized into "quality-assured publications" and "other publications") by all faculty members for whom a CV has been submitted, in *one* PDF file; this publication list helps

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[10] Publication lists must include: all authors, complete titles, journal, year, and page numbers. For each publication, if available, either a DOI address or another persistent identifier should be indicated; for publications with more than 20 authors, an "et al." citation can be used.

the FWF to determine if there are any potential conflicts of interest with reviewers. It will not be forwarded to the reviewers.

2.2.5.2 Planned dissertation projects *(Dissertation_topics.pdf)*[11]

This file should include a description of the planned dissertation projects in the context of the overall research framework (section 2.3.1). The descriptions may not exceed one page per project, must be written in structured form, and should address the hypotheses/aims, approaches/methods, time frame, and the participating faculty members. Please keep in mind that the number of the dissertation projects described must correspond with the number of doctoral candidate positions requested.[12] Please note that the project description must also include a description of the theoretical framework and of how the dissertation projects will be integrated into the research program.

2.2.5.3 List of doctoral candidates supervised over the last five years *(Supervision_list.pdf)*

The application must include a table with an overview of all doctoral candidates (co-)supervised and all dissertations assessed by the faculty members over the last five years (Feb. 2019–Feb. 2024), listed separately for each faculty member and including the following information: name of doctoral candidate, name of (co-)supervisor, topic of dissertation, start date, and date of doctoral degree or "ongoing."

2.2.6 File uploads, if applicable

In addition to the project description with annexes and the required additional documents, only the files listed in section 2.1.3 can be uploaded separately, if required.

2.3 What project-specific costs can be funded?

When requesting funding, the regulations of the respective research institution and the FWF guidelines apply. The requested funds must be summarized in the elane *Cost breakdown* form.

If the research institution for which funds are requested is entitled to deduct value-added tax (VAT), the funds should be applied for without value-added tax (net). VAT is an eligible expense only if the funding recipient is not entitled to deduct it and it is demonstrably and finally borne by the funding recipient. Recoverable VAT is also ineligible for funding if it is not reclaimed or recovered by the funding recipient.

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[11] If the proposed dissertation projects have been described in the max. 30-page project description, the additional file *Dissertation_topics.pdf* is not required. This must be briefly noted in the cover letter to the FWF.

[12] If additional doctoral student positions are funded by the research institution(s), the proposed dissertation projects may also be attached.

Funding may only be requested for the cost categories specified below.

2.3.1 Personnel costs

Funds can be requested to cover personnel costs for a maximum of five doctoral candidates in accordance with the applicable FWF personnel rates. Employment contracts for doctoral students may not exceed 75% employment (up to 30 hours per week). In the application, the research institution must briefly provide reasons for the requested number of doctoral candidate positions and the extent of their employment.

When requesting funding for PROFI (project funding via research institutions)-eligible standard personnel costs, a fixed percentual increase must be included for the subsequent year to compensate for wage raises (see PROFI standard personnel costs and salaries 2023).

2.3.2 Costs for education and training

In this category, the maximum amount per doctoral candidate and year amounts to €5,000 and is broken down into consumables, travel costs, and other costs. No additional costs can be requested.

These amounts are intended to cover the costs of academic events specific to the doctoral program (e.g., retreats, thesis committees); costs for study stays abroad; generic skills courses (e.g., project management, English academic writing, etc.); costs for advertising funded doctoral candidate positions; interview invitations, and the costs of conference travel. In addition, the funds may be used to invite visiting researchers or seminar speakers. All applications must include a brief explanation of how grant funds would be used to cover education costs.

Please note: Publication costs cannot be requested as part of the application process. Information on funding options for publications resulting from FWF-funded projects can be found on the FWF website: Open-Access Block Grant.

2.3.3 General project costs

The approved grant sum includes 8% general project costs that are permitted for funding but cannot be requested individually using the abovementioned cost categories. They are subject to the FWF's Funding Guidelines and the costs must be eligible for funding. These include, for example, costs for conference travel, dissemination activities, and minor unforeseen costs necessary for the project. Overhead costs for the research institution are not included in general project costs.

General project costs are to be entered in the appropriate field in the *Cost breakdown* form and calculated as 8% of the total funding requested. No justification for general costs is needed in Appendix A.

2.4 Resubmitting a previously rejected application

A resubmission is defined as the revision of an application which the FWF has rejected with the same or similar research or arts-based research questions, regardless of the program category. If an application is submitted on the same or a very similar research or arts-based research question and if, in the view of the faculty members, this application is not a resubmission but a completely new project, this must be explained in a separate accompanying letter to the FWF Office. For example, changes in research methods alone are not sufficient for a proposal to qualify as a completely new project. In cases of doubt, the appropriate decision-making bodies of the FWF shall decide.

Resubmissions must show changes from the rejected application. If an application has been rejected for the standardized reason C3, C4, or C5, these changes need to be substantial (based on the comments in the reviews). If no such changes are made, the FWF's decision-making bodies will return the application to the applicant without review.

When resubmitting an application, the following documents must be uploaded:

- An additional file containing an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application (*Overview_Revision.pdf*) must be submitted to the FWF. This overview will not be passed on to the reviewers.

- A response to all reviews of the rejected application must be provided *(Revision.pdf)*, even if one of the reviewers is to be excluded from reviewing the resubmitted application (see section 3.2). This response, consolidated in one document, will be forwarded to all reviewers assessing the resubmission and should address the recommendations and criticisms included in the previous reviews as well as describe the resulting changes made.

While no deadlines for the resubmission of a rejected application apply, the respective application requirements do need to be complied with. Resubmissions must be submitted as described in section 2.1, i.e., as a separate, new application and not as a supplementary application to the previously rejected proposal.

2.5 File formats, file names, and online forms

The following sections provide an overview of all files and forms to be submitted.

2.5.1   All applications must include the following parts:

a) Files:

- *Proposal.pdf* (project description incl. Annexes 1–3 and where applicable 4, with PDF bookmarks, at least for the major sections)
- *Dissertation_topics.pdf* (description of the planned dissertation projects on no more than 1 page, in structured form; with PDF bookmarks, at least for the major sections)[13]
- *Supervision_list.pdf* (overview table of all PhD students (co-)supervised and all dissertations assessed by the faculty
 in the last five years)
- *PI_publication.pdf* (two publications written by each faculty member must be named, documenting fulfillment of the general application requirements)
- *Publication_lists.pdf* (publication/works list of all the faculty members for the last five years, broken down into "quality assured publications" and "other publications")

b) Forms:

- *Research institution assignment*
- *Contact*
- *Application*
- *Program-specific data* (to be completed for each faculty member)
- *Cost breakdown*
- *Academic abstract* (in English)
- *Co-authors*
- *Other collaboration* (if applicable; for national and international collaboration partners)

2.5.2   File uploads, if applicable

- *Cover_letter.pdf (=* accompanying letter, if necessary*)*
- *Negative_list.pdf* (reviewers who should be excluded; optional)
- *Overview_Revision.pdf* (= for resubmissions, overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application)
- *Revision.pdf* (= for resubmissions, response to all reviews)

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[13]   This file is not required if the description of the dissertation projects is included in the 30-page project description.

3 Processing and Decision on the Application

3.1 Submission and requests for changes

All of the files and forms specified above must be uploaded in full to elane. Once an application has been officially submitted, the research institution and the coordinator can make no further changes to the application themselves.

The coordinator must finish preparing the application in time to allow the research institution sufficient time to approve the application for submission by **March 5, 2024 (2:00 pm local time, Vienna/Austria).** All applications approved and submitted by the research institutions by this deadline will be subjected to a formal check by the FWF Office.

If the FWF Office identifies issues with the application that it considers to be rectifiable, it will notify the research institution and the coordinator, giving them the opportunity to correct the problems within a reasonable period of time (generally 10 workdays after notification of the issues). The requested changes are to be submitted to elane as a supplementary application and approved for submission by the lead research institution if necessary. If the **requested changes** are not submitted before the deadline, the decision-making bodies at the FWF will return the application without review.

Similarly, applications will not be reviewed if they have been previously rejected by the FWF and resubmitted without appropriate revisions (see section 2.4).

Once the review process has begun, no more changes can be made to the application. The FWF must be notified immediately of any changes to the faculty during the review process; such changes require the FWF's approval.

3.2 Excluding reviewers

A list of a maximum of 3 potential reviewers who should not be consulted to review the proposal due to a possible conflict of interest can be uploaded as an additional document. This selection and the grounds for exclusion must be briefly justified. If the grounds for exclusion are professionally and technically sound, the FWF will generally fulfill such requests and will exclude those reviewers from the review process. A detailed description of the FWF's policy on conflicts of interest can be found in the General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure.

Please note that the FWF does not wish to receive, nor will it consider a list of potential reviewers from applicants.

3.3 Number of reviews required

At least three independent reviews will be obtained for the shortlist decision.

3.4 Decision-making process

The **review process** generally takes about ten months.[14] The Scientific Board decides on applications once per year on the basis of recommendations issued by the international doc.funds.connect jury (late November 2024). These funding recommendations are based on the written reviews received from international experts and on hearings held with the most promising applicants. These hearings will be held on the first two days of the meeting of the international doc.funds.connect jury (which is expected to take place in mid-November 2024). Approximately one month before this meeting, the Scientific Board will draw up a shortlist of promising applications on the basis of at least three substantive reviews; those candidates will then be invited to a hearing. After the hearings, the international doc.funds.connect jury will hold a closed session to prepare its recommendations.[15]

Selected representatives of the Christian Doppler Research Association (CDG) will be involved in the entire decision-making process in an advisory capacity.

The research institutions will be notified of these decisions in writing. Research institutions whose applications are not selected for a hearing will receive a decision letter along with the reviews received (in anonymous form) prior to the meeting of the international doc.funds.connect jury.

3.5 Grounds for rejection

The reasons for rejecting an application are assigned to one of five categories (C1–C5) and communicated to the coordinator and the lead research institution; the coordinator is also sent anonymized copies of the reviews. A detailed description of the reasons for rejection can be found in the General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure.

3.6 Reviewing resubmissions

If the application is a **resubmission** of a previously rejected proposal, the FWF will generally contact those reviewers who provided *constructive* criticism on the previous application. Reviewers who gave entirely positive or negative comments will generally not be contacted for a second review. However, please note that all resubmissions are also evaluated by new reviewers.

3.7 Proposal bans

Applications that are rejected for reason C5 will be barred for 12 months (from the date of the

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[14] Information on the average duration of the review process can be found on the FWF Dashboard.

[15] A detailed description of the decision-making process, the criteria for selecting international reviewers, detailed rules concerning conflicts of interest, and the composition of juries and review panels can be found in the General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure.

decision) and cannot be resubmitted during that period.

Applications that have been submitted three times and rejected for reasons C3 or C4 (i.e., the original application and the respective resubmissions) are also barred for 12 months (from the date of decision); rejections for reasons C1 or C2 do not count towards this total. In principle, only topics are barred, not researchers or applying research institutions.

4 Compliance with Legal Requirements and Standards of Research Integrity

4.1 Legal regulations

Please note that participating research institution(s) must comply with all legal requirements and safety provisions (e.g., Federal Disabilities Act, Federal Equal Treatment Act) that apply for the doc.funds.connect project and obtain all the necessary permits (e.g., from the Ethics Committee, the Animal Testing Commission, the National Heritage Agency, or the relevant foreign authorities).

4.2 Academic integrity

The Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI) apply.

Where a breach of these standards is suspected, the ombud of the respective research institution is responsible for investigating the issue. The research institution must report any cases of suspected serious deviations to the OeAWI. The FWF reserves the right to suspend, in part or in whole, any procedures related to applications or ongoing projects until this check or investigation has been concluded. For more detailed information, please see FWF procedure in cases of suspected violation of the standards of good research practice.

5 Data Protection and Publication of Project Data and Results

5.1 Data protection

Regarding personal data, pursuant to Art. 6 (1) item a of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the coordinator or applying research institution consents to the processing of personal data and other data (e.g., title of the project submitted, research institution, academic abstract, PR summaries) necessary for the administration of the funding by the FWF –while safeguarding business and trade secrets –for the purposes of research policy (e.g., presentation of the development of basic research in Austria, economic

analyses, funding impact reports, etc.), and for public relations work (publication of excerpts in the FWF annual report, on the FWF website, in press releases, media collaborations, etc.) and to the passing on of this data to third parties (e.g., for use in research policy studies). This consent can be revoked at any time in full or in part in writing to the FWF with effect for future data processing. Further information on the data privacy rights of the coordinator or applying research institution as well as the contact details of the FWF's data protection officers is available [here](#).

5.2   Publication of project data and results

Please note that if a grant is awarded, a PR summary in German and English will be published on the FWF website, as well as the grant amount and later, PR summaries of the project's findings in German and English. Summaries must be submitted to the FWF when the grant agreement is returned. The content of these texts is to be written in such a way as to safeguard the legitimate interests of secrecy for reasons of national security and patent rights and to guarantee that trade secrets are protected appropriately. [Guidelines for writing PR summaries](#) can be found on the FWF website.

In addition, the FWF requires a data management plan (DMP) for all approved projects. This plan should also be sent to the FWF when returning the grant agreement. The template for the DMP can be viewed and downloaded on the [FWF website](#).

The guidelines specified in the grant agreement on acknowledging the FWF as the funding institution and the FWF's [Open-Access Policy](#) apply for any publication of project results (e.g., academic publications, research data, conference papers, and media reports).

6 Appendices to the Application Guidelines

6.1 Appendix A: Information on the research institution and description of financial aspects

Information on the lead research institution(s) and any partner research institutions and the description of project finances must be presented **in English** and appended to the project description as Annex 2. Costs must be broken down and adequately justified for each point below. The list of and justification for the requested funds must correspond to the costs indicated in the *Cost breakdown* form. The description should be structured as follows:

a) Details on the lead research institution and of any partner research institutions, if applicable

- Existing personnel (not financed by the FWF, usually research personnel at the research institution(s) supporting the project)
- Existing infrastructure (available and accessible for the project)

(b) Information on the funding requested:

- Explain briefly why the personnel requested is needed for the project (requested number of doctoral candidate positions, extent of employment, and duration of involvement in the project)
- Explain briefly why the non-personnel costs requested are justified (costs for education and training)

Please list and provide justifications for the following:

Personnel costs:

Costs for education and training:

6.2 Appendix B: Notes and questions for reviewers in the doc.funds.connect program[16]

In all of its programs, the FWF actively supports equal opportunities and equal treatment. The review of an application must not put researchers at a disadvantage for non-research-related reasons such as age, gender, etc. For example, the review of applications should not focus on the researcher's actual age, but on the relation between the researcher's previous research achievements and the length of his/her research career.

Our commitment to equal opportunities also means taking into account breaks or delays in applicants' research careers (e.g., due to parental leave; long-term or chronic illness; disability; caregiving responsibilities; etc.), which may have resulted in gaps in a researcher's publication record, unorthodox career paths, or limited international research experience. Please also see our information for reviewers on unconscious bias in the decision-making process.

Only the ten most important academic or arts-based research publications/works and the ten most important additional research achievements of the faculty member are to be considered when evaluating the application. As a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), the FWF also emphasizes that, in assessing research performance, reviewers should refrain from using journal-based metrics such as journal impact factors, Article Influence Scores, or the h-index.

Please review the current proposal[17] based on the following six assessment criteria: 1) Quality of the research, 2) quality and composition of the faculty, 3) quality of the education and training program, 4) organizational structure, 5) added value, 6) ethical, sex-specific, and gender-related aspects, and 7) overall evaluation. For each of these criteria except 6) we ask you for both written comments and a rating on a scale from "outstanding" to "poor." Please be aware, however, that the FWF's funding decision will be based primarily on reviewers' written assessments rather than the ratings assigned.

Please keep in mind that sections 1 and 2 will be forwarded to the researchers in anonymous form. In the event of approval, the research institution will be allowed to read the anonymized reviews forwarded to the coordinator.

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[16] Further information can be found on our website: FWF's mission statement or the doc.funds.connect program page.

[17] The project proposal must meet the FWF's formal requirements. Please bear these in mind when writing your review. (Key formal requirements: 30 pages max. for the project description including figures and tables; 5 pages max. for the list of references; 3 pages max. for each academic CV, including a description of previous research achievements and the ten most important publications.)

Section 1:[18]

1) Quality of prior and planned research
How would you rate the quality of the faculty's research achievements to date? Is the planned research, including the planned dissertation projects, innovative and timely? How do you assess the international visibility and competitiveness of the planned research? Is the planned research project well thought out, focused in terms of content, and coherent?

2) Quality and composition of the faculty
How well qualified are the researchers involved to carry out the proposed research? How would you rate the academic qualifications and training/supervision experience of the faculty members? How do you assess the reputation and international networking of the faculty? Is the gender ratio in the faculty appropriate? How would you rate the level of diversity in the faculty (e.g. complementary competences at participating universities and UAS in the field of basic research and application-oriented research, percentage of junior researchers)? When assessing qualifications, please consider the respective career stage, taking into consideration atypical career paths and circumstances that may have slowed down their progress (e.g., parental leave, long-term or chronic illness, disability, or caretaking responsibilities).

3) Quality of education and training program
How would you rate the quality of the education/training and supervision program in terms of:
- Academic or arts-based research curriculum, including the integration of application-oriented aspects/elements, opportunities to acquire additional qualifications
- Selection procedure, supervision structures, procedures for assessing dissertations, gender-sensitive program design, mentoring
- Institutional integration and structures

4) Organizational structure
How would you rate the organizational structure and the resources (infrastructure, etc.) available at the research institution(s)?

5) Added value
Does the project provide added value in the following areas:
- Research
- Education/training
- PhD students and participating research institutions (i.e. university and UAS)
- Strengthening the existing research basis at universities and UAS

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18 Forwarded to the applying team in full

- Strengthening the cooperation between UAS and universities, taking into account the aspect of personnel development of research staff at UAS
- The sustainable integration of basic research and applied research and the strengthening of research transfer

Do you expect synergy effects to result from this cooperation, as compared to independent efforts?

6) Ethical, sex-specific, and gender-related aspects

Ethics: Have ethical considerations been addressed satisfactorily?

Sex-specific and gender-related aspects: The proposal must address all relevant gender and/or sex-specific aspects of their research questions and/or research design. Please assess whether the treatment of these components is adequate.

7) Overall evaluation

What is your overall impression of the proposal? Specifically, what would you consider its key strengths and weaknesses? Please give reasons for your answers, taking as much space as you need.

Section 2: Optional recommendations to the research team

If you are in favor of the project being funded, you may want to add to the formal assessment in Section 1 by making further and perhaps more informal comments or suggestions here. However, please note that these remarks, too, may also have an impact on the FWF's funding decision, especially if they amount to substantive criticism of the project.

Section 3: Confidential remarks to FWF

Please use this field to make comments that you do not want submitted to the research team. Feel free to also give us feedback about the evaluation process and your interactions with us.