

# Funding Guidelines of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF)

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## 1. Scope of application

These funding guidelines apply in principle to all of the FWF's funding programmes. Different guidelines may be defined within the legal scope of action of the FWF for programmes that are administered and carried out on a contractual basis on behalf and on account of the federal government or third parties (cf. Art. 2b. (5) in conjunction with Art. 2a. (4) Research and Technology Funding Act, or FTFG, as amended).

Specific features of the individual funding programmes are defined in the application guidelines of the respective programmes. These include form requirements, required qualifications of the principal investigator, evaluation criteria and procedures, limits on the number of ongoing funded projects, cost categories and rules on the acquisition of equipment, reporting requirements, and exceptions to the ban on double funding / financing.

## 2. Eligible research projects

To be eligible, research projects must be

- limited in time;
- described precisely in terms of aims and methods, especially regarding hypotheses and research questions;
- of superior quality and originality in terms of aims and methods;
- for the purpose of gaining knowledge and extending and deepening our understanding of science and the arts;
- non-profit oriented;
- independent research in terms of the EU Framework for State Aid for Research, Development, and Innovation (2014/C 198/01).

## 3. Eligibility to apply (application requirements)

One or more natural persons or legal entities are eligible to apply.

The project must be headed by persons who work in scientific/scholarly research, art, or art-related research in Austria or under the auspices of an Austrian research institution, and who can demonstrate that they possess the necessary qualifications for the specific programme.

The research project must be used to finance the non-economic activities of the research institution or must be able to demonstrate that it can be executed in accordance with the rules on state aid.

The infrastructure necessary to carry out the research project must be available.

The application guidelines of specific programmes may define appropriate qualification requirements based on the aims of the respective funding programme.

## **4. Limit on the number of funded projects**

As a rule, researchers may serve as the principal investigator in no more than three FWF-funded research projects at the same time. The application guidelines of specific programmes may define other limits in the case of research projects with different needs in terms of mentoring or workload, or as part of career advancement measures.

## **5. Language of application**

The language of application is English. The application guidelines of specific programmes may make exceptions for certain disciplines if the research project intends to only work with texts in German or another language other than English.

## **6. Eligible costs**

### **6.1. General information**

Only project-specific costs may be requested, i.e., personnel and non-personnel costs that are essential to carry out the research project and that go beyond the resources made available from the research institution's infrastructure. The FWF does not generally finance the infrastructure or basic equipment of research institutions.

The project-specific costs should be calculated in a reasonable manner. Inadequate calculations of project costs may represent a reason for rejection, even if the application is considered excellent in terms of content.

The application guidelines of specific programmes may set upper limits on the amount of funding that can be requested based on an appropriate project size for the respective funding programme.

### **6.2. Personnel costs**

#### **6.2.1. Project members**

The FWF's standard personnel costs and salaries should be used to calculate the personnel costs of project members.

#### **6.2.2. Principal investigator**

Under certain circumstances, the salary of the principal investigator can be financed with the funds of the project. The requirements that must be fulfilled to qualify for this option can be

found in the application guidelines of the specific programme. Whether the principal investigator qualifies for this option depends on the nature of the respective funding programme and the length of time which the principal investigator requesting the salary has had his or her main place of residence in Austria or was / has been working as a researcher in Austria. In addition, these requirements also take the researcher's income (whether from employed or self-employed work) into consideration.

### **6.3. Project-specific equipment**

Funding is available for the acquisition of equipment required specifically for the research project.

In this context, equipment refers to apparatus and instruments, system components, project-specific software, and other durable goods where the acquisition cost per item exceeds the amount specified in Article 13 of the Austrian Income Tax Act 1988 as amended, Federal Law Gazette No. 400/1988 and where the said equipment is financed primarily (more than 50% of the total costs of the specific item) from FWF funds.

The equipment is to be ordered and paid for by the research institution upon the instruction of the principal investigator of the respective FWF project. Each piece of equipment is to be recorded in the inventory, and the acquisition costs are to be reimbursed in accordance with the relevant agreement between the research institution and the FWF.

Depending on the programme, the FWF can exclude the funding of equipment if the respective programme focuses on the promotion of young researchers or publications.

## **7. Ban on double funding and financing, ban on double submissions**

An FWF grant cannot be requested for costs that are already borne by other funding bodies. Applications that are essentially identical may not be submitted more than once, either in the same or a different FWF funding programme.

Depending on the programme, the respective application guidelines may make exceptions if this could advance the career of the funded researcher.

## **8. Form of application**

As a rule, applications are to be submitted online according to the current application guidelines of the respective FWF programme. The application guidelines of specific programmes may make an exception if online submission is not possible due to a lack of technical means.

## 9. Assessment of research proposals

The assessment of research proposals is based solely on internationally recognised quality criteria and on the importance of the research project for the potential gain in knowledge and the extension or deepening of our understanding of science and the arts.

Any aspects of a research project that go beyond the realm of scholarly research (e.g., economic, social, or ecological) should be mentioned, but they will not play a part in the assessment of whether the project should be funded.

The application guidelines of specific programmes may use additional criteria, especially if the specific focus of the programme demands them.

## 10. Processing of applications

### 10.1. Formal check

The FWF Office undertakes a formal check of submitted applications. This check is usually conducted by academically qualified staff together with the support of the reporters of the FWF. Applications will not be sent out for review if they

- i) are outside the FWF's scope of action (e.g., missing or unclear hypotheses or research questions) or
- ii) are incomplete or
- iii) do not meet the formal requirements of the FWF (e.g., exceed the scope of the application, do not comply with the formatting rules).

Applicants can rectify any errors or problems identified by the FWF within a reasonable period of time. Information on the specific length of time for corrections can be found in the application guidelines of the respective programme. This period is usually between 10 days and 3 weeks.

If the errors and problems are not rectified, the FWF will return the applications without review, i.e., they will not be processed further.

Applications that are rejected or returned without review cannot be resubmitted without revision. The appropriate extent of revision depends on the reasons for rejection or return without review.

### 10.2. Review process

Applications that meet the formal criteria will be sent for review to the reviewers suggested by the reporters of the FWF Board and confirmed by the decision-making bodies of the FWF. This is the beginning of the review process.

The selected reviewers are generally persons working outside Austria. The decision-making bodies of the FWF may make exceptions depending on the nature of the proposed project.

The minimum number of reviewers required to reach a funding decision depends on the requested amount of funding and is determined by the decision-making bodies of the FWF.

Once the review process has begun, no more changes can be made to the application.

The application guidelines of specific programmes may define additional or different steps in the review process or forms of review if they serve to ensure the quality of the FWF's funding decisions.

## 11. Funding decisions

Once the review process has been completed, the FWF Board uses the results of the review to decide on whether and to what extent projects should be funded. Applicants are notified in writing of the decisions taken by the FWF Board.

## 12. Publication of data

All project-specific data are processed by the FWF using information technology in conformity with the applicable data protection regulations and are in part published in the FWF's annual report; in addition, data are passed on in anonymous form for statistical analyses and for research policy purposes unless secrecy must be maintained for reasons of national defence or patent law, or publication is inappropriate in terms of protecting trade secrets. The English and German abstracts, the amount of funding approved, and subsequently the German and English abstracts of the final project report are published on the FWF's website.

## 13. Open Access Policy

As a signatory to the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, the FWF is committed to supporting and promoting sustained open access to scholarly publications and research data. To this end, the FWF requires all principal investigators and project members to make any publications which arise from FWF-funded projects freely available through open access media on the Internet and supports project members accordingly.

The applicable [Open Access Policy](#) may define useful types of open access media based on the respective quality control procedure (peer review).

## **14. Guidelines for good scientific practice**

The Guidelines for [good scientific practice](#) of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI) are to be observed.

Where a breach of these standards is suspected, the case will be investigated by the ombudsperson of the research institution responsible or by the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity. The FWF reserves the right to suspend any procedures related to applications or ongoing projects, either partly or entirely, until such investigations have been concluded.

## **15. Effective date**

Based on the resolution passed by the FWF Executive Board on 20 November 2018, these guidelines come into effect on 1 January 2019.