

Joint Press Release

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Germany's Excellence Strategy: WR and DFG Issue Calls for Proposals for Universities of Excellence and Clusters of Excellence

Proposal requirements, funding criteria and timetable online / Submission of draft proposals for Clusters of Excellence until 3 April 2017

On 28 September 2016, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) and the Wissenschaftsrat (WR, German Council of Science and Humanities) issued calls for proposals in the Clusters of Excellence and Universities of Excellence funding lines, marking the start of the Excellence Strategy. This programme, which was agreed upon by the heads of Germany's federal and state governments in mid-June of this year, is designed to continue the development of Germany's universities successfully begun with the Excellence Initiative by supporting research of the highest standard, enhancing research profiles and facilitating cooperation in the research system. The DFG is responsible for implementing the Clusters of Excellence funding line and the German Council of Science and Humanities for the Universities of Excellence funding line.

The programme calls are the result of an inaugural meeting of the Committee of Experts for the Excellence Strategy, which convened in Bonn last week. The committee consists of 39 researchers predominantly from abroad who, upon recommendation by the DFG and the WR, were appointed by the Joint Science Conference (GWK). The Committee of Experts defined proposal and eligibility requirements, funding criteria and the programme's schedule.

The first funding line encompasses a two-stage competitive process in which universities can submit draft proposals for Clusters of Excellence until 3 April 2017. The draft proposals will then be evaluated by international review panels, after which the Committee of Experts will decide at the end of September 2017 which projects will be invited to submit full proposals. The final funding decision for Clusters of Excellence will be made in September 2018. Universities that are successful in the first funding line and meet a minimum number of Clusters of Excellence are then eligible to submit proposals in the Universities of Excellence funding line. Proposals may be submitted until December 2018. The proposals will undergo review, with final funding decisions for Universities of Excellence to be made in July 2019.

"The two programme calls effectively implement the Administrative Agreement by the Federal and State Governments on the Excellence Strategy. The Committee of Experts discussed the programme in-depth, identifying and defining key points on eligibility and proposal requirements and unanimous-

ly agreeing upon review and decision-making procedures,” explained DFG President Professor Dr. Peter Strohschneider and WR Chairman Professor Dr. Manfred Prenzel. “The universities now have the information they need to continue their planning. In addition, the framework for reviews and decisions according to academic quality criteria has been set.”

Further information

The calls for proposals in the Clusters of Excellence and Universities of Excellence funding lines can be downloaded from the DFG and WR websites.

www.wissenschaftsrat.de/arbeitsbereiche-arbeitsprogramm/exzellenzstrategie

www.dfg.de/excellence_strategy

Detailed information on the Excellence Strategy is also available at: www.gwk-bonn.de

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