

I. OBJECTIVE

The Einstein Foundation Doctoral Program aims to support excellent, structured long-term doctoral programmes and artistic third cycle programmes offered by Berlin universities and Charité – Universitätsmedizin by promoting pioneering concepts that seek to develop, field-test, and institutionalize practices designed to provide sustainable solutions to structural challenges in doctoral education. Building on collaborations across Berlin universities and research institutions, Einstein Foundation Doctoral Programs will develop outstanding best practices that nurture innovation in other programmes and have the potential to be institutionalized throughout doctoral education. A further aim is to amplify the appeal of Berlin's doctoral programmes, specifically to exceptional doctoral students from abroad, and to provide the staff heading such structured programmes with additional resources to implement new policies. The opportunity to access designated funding to pursue new, self-defined objectives and targeted innovation will boost their motivation to improve their programme's outcomes and refine governance policies as practice improves in the medium term.

II. ELIGIBILITY

The institutions eligible to apply for funding are Charité – Universitätsmedizin, Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin as well as Universität der Künste Berlin. They may do so either independently or in cooperation with publicly funded non-university research bodies based in Berlin. Joint applications can also be submitted by two or more structured doctoral programmes. While institutions may cooperate with bodies based elsewhere, applicants should be aware that funding can only be assigned to institutions based in Berlin and may not be forwarded to partnering institutions outside the State of Berlin (with the exception of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

III. FUNDING

Successful programmes will bear the title "Einstein Foundation Doctoral Program". Funding will be awarded for three years and can be used flexibly to cover expenses for staff and directly incurred expenses. Applications must include a budget plan. Successful programmes will receive up to €300,000 for three years. Please note that funding can be requested flexibly in annual releases varying between €80,000 and €120,000. Applications are reviewed once a year to select up to two successful programmes. Successful programmes will hold the title "Einstein Foundation Doctoral Program" for five years.

IV. APPLICATION PROCESS

The Einstein Foundation invites applicants to submit concepts providing long-term solutions to the structural challenges they face in their respective programmes, especially in areas in which they receive no, or only insufficient, funding from other sources. There are no thematic restrictions regarding the use of funds. Submissions should also highlight the outstanding quality of the proposed programme and of the applicants making the submission, building on the assessment criteria predominantly used in their respective field of research.

Programmes may, for instance, seek to:

- improve the processes used to select and recruit doctoral candidates, for example by seeking support from external experts,
- create new synergies that benefit Berlin's university and non-university research environment or doctoral education and training, or that forge fresh partnerships with external partners,
- set up measures to avoid and navigate conflicts in doctoral training,
- strengthen alumni networks,
- promote the innovative use of digital recruitment or training tools,
- improve the programme's internationality, diversity, mental health, equal opportunities, or family-friendly policies,
- establish new models helping doctoral students to better navigate pre- and post-PhD transitions, or improve career planning services for doctoral candidates,
- safeguard the quality of research and doctoral candidates' adherence to good scientific practice,
- promote joint student initiatives,
- pursue aims or objectives related to the programme's disciplinary scope and research area.

The grant should not primarily be used to create additional doctoral positions or scholarships.

Applications must be submitted in **English** and include:

a. an outline of the programme no more than two (2) pages long, including:

- programme details (name, year established, funding source(s), research area, topic)
- expertise and/or successfully implemented measures relevant to the concept described in b.

b. a concept outlining the use of funds no longer than four (4) pages long (including references to scientific research, if applicable), including:

- an analysis of key challenges,
- a description of planned measures and their anticipated impacts,
- a schedule indicating the long-term implementation of the concept (also covering the post-funding period, if applicable).

c. an evaluation and dissemination concept no longer than one (1) page in length describing the envisioned best practice, including:

- details on how the concept's implementation will be evaluated,
- plans regarding the dissemination and institutionalization of the planned measures across Berlin's universities and research institutions.

d. letter(s) of support from the university/universities or the non-university research institutions detailing:

- the doctoral programme's role in shaping the institution's profile,
- the current structural challenges limiting doctoral education and training which the concept seeks to remedy,

- the degree and extent of cooperation with other institutions, if applicable, and
- the institutional measures intended to disseminate and institutionalize the envisioned best practice (by seeking the expertise of the institutions' umbrella organizations or societies in order to improve doctoral training, if applicable).

V. ACCESS TO FUNDING

Grants are disbursed through the budget of the host university, Charité – Universitätsmedizin, or publicly funded non-university research institutions as third-party funding. These institutions will act as employer of the individuals funded by the Einstein Foundation's grant. If a cooperation partner is involved in the project, the share of funding assigned to the partner institution will be forwarded by the host institution. Persons paid from these forwarded funds will be employed by the partner institution.

The Einstein Foundation will support successful programmes in publicizing their measures nationally and internationally.

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