

Funding Guidelines

Applicability

These Funding Guidelines apply to the following funding programs:

- stand-alone projects
- priority research programs (special research programs, national research networks)
- doctoral programs (Doctoral Programs Plus)
- international mobility programs (Erwin Schrödinger Fellowships, Lise Meitner Program)
- programs for the promotion of women (Elise Richter Program, Hertha Firnberg Program)
- program for Arts-based Research (PEEK)
- programs for international cooperation (e.g. EUROCORES Program of the European Science Foundation (ESF), ERA-Net programs of the EU, calls within the frame of bilateral research cooperations)
- stand-alone publications and translations of stand-alone publications

Apart from the general guidelines given in the present document, specific guidelines pertaining to individual funding programs must be respected. These are available on the FWF's web site (www.fwf.ac.at). They relate in particular to requirements for individual programs, necessary qualifications, age limits, publication activity and relevant preliminary work.

The guidelines for awards and prizes (Start Program and Wittgenstein Prize) are published separately.

Type of project that may be requested

Funding may be requested for research projects in any branch of science and the humanities. The goals, methodologies and in particular the hypotheses should be precisely described. Projects should be of limited duration and should be in the area of non-profit oriented scientific research or non-profit oriented arts-based research as defined by the Program for Arts-based Research. "Double funding" is not permitted: in other words, a project for which support is being requested may not receive full support from another funding source or from a different FWF program. Applications that are essentially identical may not be submitted – either in the same program or in different programs – unless the specific application guidelines explicitly make an exception to this general rule.

The assessment of whether to fund a project is based solely on internationally recognized criteria of quality and on the importance of the proposed work for the potential gain in knowledge and the extension or deepening of our understanding of science or the arts. In the Program for Arts-based Research, the visibility of the work to a broader public (beyond the arts and academic communities) represents an additional criterion. Otherwise, any aspects of a project that go beyond basic science (results of relevance to society, to the environment or to the economy) should be mentioned, although they play no part in the assessment of whether the project should be funded.

Clinical studies are funded only if their financial limits are clearly defined and if the applications are hypothesis-driven and meet the scientific criteria that are applicable to all other projects supported by the FWF.

Eligibility to apply for funding

Individual scientists or teams of scientists working in Austria or persons engaged in arts-based research in Austria are eligible to apply for support from the FWF, provided that they have the required qualifications and can show that the infrastructure needed to perform the project is available to them. They must meet any requirements particular to the funding program under which they are requesting support and must have sufficient free capacity to carry out in full the project for which support is requested. Applicants must be “natural persons”, i.e. applications are not permitted from institutes, institutions or companies.

In general projects must be carried out in Austria or based at an Austrian research institution.

The programs to promote the mobility of scientists represent exceptions:

- Applications may be submitted within the Lise Meitner Program only by scientists who at the time the application is submitted have been based in Austria for not more than three of the previous ten years.
- Projects supported by Erwin Schrödinger Fellowships are performed at foreign research institutions.

Types of costs that may be requested

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

The project-specific costs should be calculated in a reasonable way and in cases where particular funding programs have defined upper limits these may not be exceeded. Inadequate calculations of project costs may represent a reason for rejecting applications, even those that are scientifically excellent.

Subject to the provisions of any possible future collective contract for university employees, personnel costs for project workers should be based on the FWF’s salary scheme, which is updated annually. The salaries given in this scheme represent minimum levels; it is not permitted to pay lower salaries.

With the exception of projects submitted within programs for scientific mobility or for the promotion of women and of projects submitted by independent scientists (see below), no personnel costs may be requested for project leaders.

Applications by independent scientists: If a researcher does not have a contract of employment at an Austrian research institution and has no regular income sufficient to cover his or her costs of living (subsistence level), he or she is eligible to request a salary for leading a research project, provided that he or she has been based in Austria for at least three of the previous ten years. This restriction does not apply to scientists who submit applications to continue their research in Austria after completion of projects supported under the Lise Meitner Program.

Project leaders who are self-employed or employed part-time are allowed to receive supplementary income. The level of support payable will be reduced in relation to the level of employment within the project funded by the FWF and in the case of self-employed scientists it will not exceed 50 % of the full salary. Income resulting from lecture contracts is permitted up to the legally defined limit payable for work on an hourly basis.

Manner of application

Applications must be submitted both in writing and in electronic form according to the current requirements of the individual funding programs.

Processing and review of applications

The Secretariat undertakes a formal check of applications. Incomplete applications or those that are not in accordance with the FWF’s regulations (in particular those that exceed the permitted length or do not comply with the formatting guidelines) will be returned. Problems may be rectified by the applicants within a reasonable period of time. If this is not done, the FWF’s Executive Board will reject the applications without subjecting them to review. Such applications may not be resubmitted unless they are substantially revised. Applications that have previously been rejected and that are resubmitted without substantial revision will similarly be rejected without review.

All applications that meet the formal criteria will be sent for review to referees nominated by the FWF’s Executive Board. Other than in exceptional cases, no referees working within Austria are chosen. The minimum number of reviews required before a funding decision may be reached depends on the requested level of funding and is regularly determined by the FWF’s Executive Board.

Once the review procedure has begun it is not possible to make changes to applications. For programs with application deadlines (with the exception of priority research programs) no changes may be made once applications have been received.

In the case of programs managed together with one or more international partner organizations (such as the ESF, non-Austrian funding agencies),

- the applications are processed and reviewed by the FWF or by the appropriate international partner organizations in coordination with the FWF;
- the precise procedures and the minimum numbers of reviews required for funding decisions are determined in coordination with the appropriate international partner organizations;
- referees may be nominated by the participating partner organizations.

Two-step review procedures and interim reviews

In the case of programs with two-step review procedures or where interim reviews are required, evaluations generally take the form of panel hearings with international experts. It is the responsibility of the applicants to coordinate the dates of the hearings with the FWF and with any other funding organizations involved so that they take place in time for the appropriate decision-making meetings.

Funding decisions

After completion of the review procedure the FWF's Board decides, based on the results of the review, whether and to what extent applications should be supported. Applicants are informed in writing of the decisions taken by the FWF committees.

If the decision is positive a contract of funding will be issued. In all FWF funding contracts the court of jurisdiction is located in Vienna, with the precise choice depending on which court is appropriate to the case. A contract is not legally binding until a copy signed by the funding recipient has been received by the FWF.

In the case of programs managed together with an international partner organization (e.g. the ESF) the funding decision may be subject to particular requirements of the appropriate international partner organization.

Special rules for stand-alone publications and translations of stand-alone publications

The program to support stand-alone publications awards grants – based on scientific review – towards the costs of production, translation and proofreading of scientific publications. To be eligible to apply for such grants, authors must carry out their scientific work primarily in Austria.

Publications abroad are eligible for support only if the content of the work explicitly refers to Austria.

The FWF fixes a maximum level of support and limits the number of copies in the edition.

Within the program "Translation of stand-alone publications", publishers are granted subsidies towards the costs of translating works into a language appropriate to the particular field. Translation should be undertaken by proven experts in the field. The level of subsidy is based on a tender for translation to be provided by the publisher. The works to be translated must be by authors who perform at least the bulk of their scientific activity in Austria. The Board may only grant a subsidy if the translation is to be published by a scientific publisher; the publisher should use an international peer review procedure to evaluate the quality of the requested translation of a stand-alone publication.

Observance of legislative provisions

Applicants are required to comply with all valid legal (e.g. the Austrian laws relating to the equal treatment of disabled persons) and safety provisions and to obtain any permits required for their research (e.g. from the Ethics Commission, the Commission for Animal Experimentation, the Department for Protection of Ancient Monuments or the corresponding authorities abroad).

Rules of good scientific practice

The general rules of good scientific practice should be observed. This means in particular that

- a) references to information used in the preparation of applications should be given in the form customary in the appropriate scientific disciplines;

- b) publications must be presented in a manner that makes all results comprehensible;
- c) openness and fairness among researchers is a matter of course and nobody is denied due recognition for his or her scientific contribution.

If there is a suspected breach of these rules the case will be investigated by the ombudsman of the research institution responsible or by the Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity. During the investigation the review procedure will be interrupted.