

Doctoral Programmes (DK)

Differences from the General Principles of Decision-making Procedures

Introductory remarks: the review process DK takes place in two stages, in which the quality of the consortium and of the application is evaluated. The “concept” (first stage) is submitted by the Speaker and subjected to a written review. The “full application” (second stage) is reviewed by means of a hearing with international experts. Applications for a DK must contain a pre-contract between the Speaker and the research institution or university in addition to the written application. Among other things this pre-contract should specify the financial support to be offered by the research institution or university. The review procedure – from submission of concept to decision on the full application – lasts a minimum of 14 months.

Handling of the “Concept”

Submission of applications:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”. Applications for support by means of the programmes listed above must conform to the current “Guidelines for submitting concepts to the FWF”.

The FWF guarantees that all applications placed by **30th of September** (the date of the postmark) will be considered for funding by November of the following year. Post hoc improvements / changes to the content of the application are permitted on the basis of a list of deficiencies provided by the FWF to the applicants within 10 days (running days) after the notification via Email through the FWF. If the problems are not rectified within this period of time, the FWF will reject the application without review.

Nevertheless, with the prior agreement of the FWF office it is possible to send “formal” supporting documents (e.g. original signatures) after the deadline for submission of applications. Applications will be assigned to one “Reporter in Charge” and two additional reporters. In some cases more than three members of the Board may be involved with an application.

Initiation of international review:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”.

Minimum number of reviews:

For a positive decision on a particular application a minimum of 3 reviews are required. If it is clear

from the reviews that the decision will be negative, a decision may be based on fewer reviews. If an application impinges on several scientific disciplines the number of reviews required may be increased.

Structure of the Review:

A number of questions are addressed to the referees, relating to the quality of the consortium and of the application (see Annex 1). The referees answer by means of a written statement but do not assign any formal numerical rating.

Funding decision:

Fundamentally as described in “General principles of the decision-making procedure”. Speakers of concepts that are “approved” as a result of the referees’ reports are invited to submit full applications. They are given information relating to the content of the full application during the subsequent “Proposers’ Day”.

Resubmissions:

Concepts that are not approved may be revised and resubmitted. In the case of a resubmission it is the general practice to contact some of the referees of the rejected version as well as new referees. It is thus important to draw attention to any changes made in response to explicit suggestions from the referees.

Handling of the “Full Application”

Submission of applications:

Submission of a full application is only possible after approval of a concept. Applications for support by means of the programmes listed above must conform to the current “Guidelines for submitting full applications to the FWF”. Applicants are generally allowed 8 weeks to prepare a full application. Full applications are assigned to the same “Reporter in Charge” and additional reporters, who were responsible for handling the concept.

Initiation of international review:

The referees will represent a mixture of referees who reviewed the concept and additional experts. The review will take the form of a hearing in Vienna.

Minimum number of reviews:

A minimum of five referees are generally required before the Board may make a positive decision

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on funding. The referees assess the quality of the application by means of a one-day hearing. If an application impinges on several disciplines, the number of referees may be increased. For each hearing the FWF will attempt to invite at least 2 female referees to participate.

Structure of review:

Before a hearing, the referees are requested to provide the FWF with written statements on the full application. These statements will be made available to the FWF representatives and permits the reporters handling the application to form a preliminary impression of the application's quality. The applicants will receive the written statements after the finale decision has been taken by the Board of the FWF.

Within the hearing the referees have the opportunity to discuss the application with the applicants and to resolve any open questions and in this way to assess the application and to evaluate the applicants' scientific qualifications as well as the educational structure.

The extent of scientific collaboration, in other words the so-called "added value" of the large-scale project, will be taken into consideration and in the case of an application for a DK the quality of the educational structure will also be closely examined.

After the hearing the FWF representatives discuss individual aspects of the project together with the referees in a "closed session". The referees' comments will be noted by the FWF and will be summarized – without attributing particular comments to individual referees – in the form of the hearing's minutes. After the FWF Board reaches its decision, the minutes will be transmitted to the applicants. In addition, the referees assign ratings to the overall application and to various aspects of it. These ratings are not forwarded to the applicants.

Funding decision:

Funding decisions for these projects are taken in the final Board meeting of each calendar year. The decisions are based on the contents of the written statements and the minutes of the "closed session" and the numerical ratings assigned by the referees. The FWF reporters summarize the referees' views, describing the referees' overall opinion as reflected in the minutes of the "closed session". A positive funding decision on a DK is always subject to a condition: the pre-contract concluded between the Speaker and the university submitted together with the full application must be converted to a valid contract and sent to the FWF before any financial support may be provided.

Remark: The project has to start the latest by March 1st of the following year. The next possible starting date is the 1st of January the year after. The standardized justifications for a rejection, which are stated in the "General Principles of the decision-making procedure", are not applied to

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this programme.

Resubmissions:

If a full application is rejected, the applicants may generally restart the procedure by submitting a fresh concept. In such cases, the FWF normally contacts referees, who were involved with the previous versions as well as involving new referees. It is thus important to draw attention to any changes made in response to explicit suggestions from the referees.

Annex 1:

Guidelines for the evaluation of a draft proposal for Doctoral Programmes (DK)

Quality of DK research programme

- Quality of programme design (specialist orientation and breadth, innovative approaches, international competitiveness, gender relevant aspects, ethical aspects etc.); quality of research on which DK is based (international visibility, relation to current state of the art, innovation potential, etc.)

Quality of DK education and training programme

- Quality of supervision and education/training programme (selection procedures; supervision structures, procedure for assessing dissertations, teamwork, additional qualifications; gender relevant aspects in dissertation topics [where relevant to the subject area])

Quality and composition of faculty

- Scientific/scholarly qualifications and reputation, international networks and gender distribution among faculty members

Organisation and funding

- Quality of organisational design (management)
- Quality of the programme's dissemination and communication plan for the sake of enhancing visibility (including an open access policy) and the programme's contribution to increasing public awareness of science and research in general
- Integration and connection with university focus areas in science and research (priority research programmes, doctoral and graduate programme groups at university/universities, etc)

Written Statements

The Review Panel will be asked to comment on the following aspects providing their written statements. These statements will be prepared on the basis of the written application and will be forwarded to the applicants after the decision of the board has been taken.

Overall evaluation of the DK scientific quality of the proposed research judged by prevailing international standards

- Including aspects of topicality, innovation, competitiveness, appropriateness of methods, internal structure – gender relevance (if appropriate)

Scientific quality of the Faculty Members (research team)

- Including aspects of reputation and potential, international competitiveness, international cooperation, visibility, gender balance

Added value to the research

- that would result from implementation of a DK

Training goals

Added value of the DK student's profile for the scientific area

- that would result from implementation of a DK

Training programme

Presented training programme for the students

- Training aims, scientific training programme and supervision, additional training programme, international contacts Quality of the infrastructure available, university measures for incorporation, selection and monitoring procedures

Quality of the commitment of the university

- Degree of financial and organisational support

Overall Evaluation - Open Questions – Recommendations

- Additional aspects that should have been addressed in the proposal. Recommendations to improve on the success of the project

Closed Session

The Review Panel will be asked to comment on the following aspects in the course of the closed session of the evaluation hearing. A final overall evaluation form will be provided at the hearing.

DK PROJECT AS A WHOLE

1. Quality of the Planned Research

- 1.1. Is the research programme framing the thesis projects innovative and internationally competitive? Are there any comparable programmes or competitors?
- 1.2. Are the overall research questions appropriate? Does the research theme provide enough opportunities for future PhD generations beyond the scope of the first funding period?
- 1.3. Are there gender specific aspects in the research programme that are relevant? If yes, what are they and do the applicants / does the applicant address those appropriately?

2. Quality of the Faculty

Are the Faculty Members well qualified to implement an internationally visible research and training centre? Is the gender balance of the group appropriate?

3. Quality of the Training Programme

- 3.1. Is the scientific training programme appropriate?
- 3.2. Are the student selection procedures appropriate?
- 3.3. Is the students' success monitoring well laid out?

4. Added Value

- 4.1. Does the implementation of the DK -programme produce added value? Does it improve the PhD-education as compared to the status quo?
- 4.2. Does it give the students a competitive advantage on an international level?

INDIVIDUAL FACULTY MEMBERS

Individual Research Area of the Faculty Member

- Are the goals of the thesis project well defined and is the conceptual / theoretical and methodological approach innovative and appropriate? Will it break new ground scientifically?
- How well is the thesis project suited to/embedded into the DK?

Qualification of the Faculty Member

- How would you describe the scientific qualification and potential of the Faculty Member of the student?