

In accordance with its Funding Guidelines of January 1, 2022  
(as amended), the FWF has issued the following Application  
Guidelines for

# Academic Journals

effective as of November 1, 2024, version 1

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## 1 General information

This document has been prepared in German and English for your convenience. In the event of a dispute, the German version shall prevail.

### 1.1 Program objective

The objective is to support the establishment or modernisation of academic journals based in Austria with the aim of meeting the minimum requirements for publication formats of [Plan S of the cOAlition S](#). This is in the interest of the freedom of science and of providing the public with unrestricted access to the results of publicly funded research.

### 1.2 What types of academic journals are eligible for funding?

The funding applies to academic journals of all scientific disciplines in accordance with the program objectives.

The FWF only approves funding for academic journals if the establishment or modernisation as indicated in Plan S of the cOAlition S would not be possible without additional financial support.

### 1.3 What types of academic journals are not eligible for funding?

Academic journals that already meet the cOAlition S Plan S requirements are not eligible for funding.

### 1.4 Submission

There are no submission deadlines for this program; applications can be submitted at any time. Applications must be submitted online using the [elane](#) digital application portal.

Once the application has been submitted online, a PDF [cover sheet](#) will be generated. The application is not considered to be officially submitted until the FWF receives the signed cover sheet (see [section 2.5](#)).

#### 1.4.1 Who is eligible to apply?

All media owners operating in Austria pursuant to the [Media Act](#) (§1 [1] item 8) are eligible to apply for funding for the establishment or modernisation of an academic journal. This means that the applicant must be responsible for the basic editorial direction, content design, and publication manner of the scientific journal.

Media owners can be either a natural person or a legal entity. In the case of a legal entity, a contact person must be named to the FWF to whom the media owner has granted the rights required for the fulfilment of the contract and external representation and who will act as the applicant for the FWF on behalf of the media owner.

## 1.5 What are the requirements?

### 1.5.1 Journal

The journal must have high international visibility and unique selling points. It must be significant for the scientific community in its research discipline and beyond.

The scientists involved (journal editor and editorial board) must be qualified to run the journal. Quality assurance procedures (e.g. editorial guidelines, peer review, ethical standards) must meet international standards.

### 1.5.2 Granting of rights

#### **Creative Commons Licence**

When establishing or modernising academic journals according to Plan S of cOAlition S, the licences [CC BY 4.0](#) or [CC BY-SA 4.0](#) may be used. As a further option, the licence [CC BY-ND 4.0](#) can be offered for individual articles if a justification is provided.

#### **Acknowledgement of FWF funding**

The contractual partner of the FWF must ensure that the FWF's support is mentioned in the journal. The journal must include the text **“Published with the support of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): [Grant-DOI]”** in the language of the publication **and the FWF logo**<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.6 What types of funding can be requested?

Funding is available for the establishment or modernisation of academic journals that could not be published or realised without additional financial support.

This funding is provided for establishment or modernisation costs that are directly attributable to the journal project.

Please note that funding is **not** available for the following costs:

- [Article Processing Charges \(APC\)](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Please click [here](#) for the FWF logo.

- Equipment purchases
- Infrastructure costs
- Costs of translations from English into any other language

Multiple funding is not permitted (see [FWF Funding Guidelines](#)).

## 2 Application

### 2.1 Section of the application

A complete application must include the following sections:

#### 2.1.1 Academic abstract

The academic abstract must be written in English, may not exceed 3,000 characters (including spaces, no formulas or special characters), and is used to inform potential reviewers about the project. The abstract must use the English headings provided below and be entered into the online form provided for this purpose.

- Thematic focus
- International visibility / unique selling points
- Implementation of the Plan S common requirements and specific conditions
- Sustainable long-term archiving strategy
- Primary researchers involved

Where alternatives are indicated between slashes, please select the alternative that applies to your application.

#### 2.1.2 Content section

The content section is limited to 12 consecutively numbered pages, including the table of contents (required), and where applicable, a list of abbreviations, headings, figures, captions, tables, footnotes, etc.

The content section must also include the Annexes 1-2 on additional pages:

- Annex 1: Financial aspects (see [Appendix A](#))
- Annex 2: Confirmation by the journal editor of the funding and strategy for the long-term continuation of the journal for at least six years after the end of the start-up funding.

The application, including these annexes, must be uploaded as *one* file named *Proposal.pdf*. This document will be sent to the reviewers by the FWF.

### 2.1.3 Additional documents

- Where applicable:
  - Cover letter accompanying the application (optional)
  - List of max. 3 researchers (optional) - including, if applicable, reviewers of a rejected proposal - who are to be excluded from the review process (see [section 3.2](#)), with a brief justification
  - Additional documents in the case of resubmission: If the application is a revised version of a previously rejected application (see [section 2.4](#)), a response to the reviews and an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application (Overview\_revision) must be uploaded.

Any additional documents (e.g., recommendations on potential reviewers, letters of recommendation) will not be considered in further stages of the application process.

### 2.1.4 Forms to be completed

The following forms are required: *Application form*, *Contact form*, *Cost breakdown form*, *Academic abstract form*, *Co-authors form*

## 2.2 Application content and format

### 2.2.1 Language of application

To allow applications to be reviewed by international experts, applications must be submitted in English. If desired, a version in German or another language may be added as a supplement. Submission solely in German or another project-relevant language other than English is only permitted in exceptional cases. Such exceptions apply exclusively to applications from the fields of linguistic and literary studies which address only texts in German or languages other than English. In all such cases, it is absolutely necessary to consult [FWF's program management](#) prior to application and then submit an academic abstract of the application as well as a brief yet convincing statement (in digital form) explaining why submission in a language other than English is justified for substantive academic reasons. The final decision shall be made by the decision-making bodies of the FWF.

This rule also applies to the **publication** of academic journals exclusively in German or in another relevant specialist language other than English, but not to individual articles in academic journals.

## 2.2.2 Content section: Scope and formatting requirements

The content section may not exceed 12 pages. It must contain a table of contents with page numbers. Optional components such as a list of abbreviations or figures, captions, tables, footnotes, list of literature cited in the application ("*References*"), etc. are to be included in the 12-page limit.

The continuous text of the content section and the Annexes 1-2 must be written without exception in 11 pt. font with 1.5 line (15–20 pt.) spacing and at least 2 cm margins. A standard, easily legible font must be used for the body text. The formatting requirements (font type and size, line spacing, and margins) of the content section also apply for the additional files, except for documents not prepared by the applicant.

Citations in the text and the list of works cited (*References*) in the application must be in line with the conventions of the respective discipline, preferably according to a widely used style guide (e.g., *Chicago Manual of Style*, *APA Publication Manual*). The choice of citation conventions or style guide is left to the applicant, but must be implemented consistently throughout the entire application. Where available, a [DOI address](#) (DOI = Digital Object Identifier) or another [Persistent Identifier](#) should be provided for the literature cited.

## 2.2.3 Content section

The content section is made up of the application for funding for the establishment or modernisation of an academic journal, which may not exceed 12 pages including the table of contents and must contain the components described in [section 2.2.4](#), and annexes 1-2. The annexes are to be attached to the application for the establishment or modernisation of an academic journal in the order specified starting in [section 2.2.5](#). In addition to the basic information required in the forms (e.g. academic abstract, ethical aspects, sex and gender-relevant aspects), only the content section, including the annexes, is forwarded to the reviewers.

## 2.2.4 Components of the application for the establishment or modernisation of an academic journal

- 1) **International visibility:** The application must describe how the journal plans to achieve the highest possible level of international visibility (also beyond disciplinary borders) or increase its current impact. It should address factors such as the journal's thematic orientation, target groups, unique selling points, and strategies for attracting internationally renowned authors.
- 2) **Editorial policy:** Journal editors and members of the editorial board must be listed. The majority of the journal editors and the members of the editorial board must be known when the application is submitted and must have agreed to actively participate if funding is approved.



- 3) **Plan S compliance:** Implementation of the *common requirements* and *specific conditions* of Plan S (see Part III 1.1 and 1.2 of the [Principles and Implementation | Plan S](#)).
- 4) **Timetable:** (max. three years) Schedule for the establishment or modernisation of the journal.

## 2.2.5 Annex 1: Financial aspects

Concise justifications for the funding requested (see [Appendix A](#)) and a strategy for the long-term maintenance of the journal: Individual expenses for start-up funding by the FWF must be listed and justified.

If additional financial support is being provided from other sources during the start-up funding period, please itemize and explain what it will be used for.<sup>2</sup>

A financing model (e.g. through institutional sponsorship, author fees, etc.) must be detailed for the **six years** following the start-up funding period.

## 2.2.6 Annex 2: Confirmation by the journal editor

Confirmation by the journal editor of the funding and strategy for the long-term continuation of the journal for at least six years after the end of the start-up funding.

## 2.3 Eligible costs

Funding is available for the technical production aspects of establishing or modernising an academic journal with the aim of meeting the minimum requirements for publication formats of [Plan S the cOAlition S](#). The types of costs which may or may not be eligible for funding are specified in [section 1.2](#), [section 1.3](#), and [section 1.6](#).

For academic journals, the FWF provides a **lump sum grant of up to €50,000** as a subsidy for production costs.

This funding program for academic journals with this level of financial support will be available until the end of 2024. After this time, the FWF will decide whether to continue funding academic journals in this way.

## 2.4 Resubmitting a previously rejected application

A resubmission is defined as the revision of an application the FWF has previously rejected.

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<sup>2</sup> A confirmation must be provided by all institutions making financial contributions during the start-up funding period and towards long-term funding.

Resubmissions must show changes from the rejected application. If an application has been rejected for the reasons C3, C4, and C5, these changes need to be substantial (based on the comments in the reviews). If no such changes are made, the FWF's decision-making bodies will return the application to the applicant without review.

When resubmitting an application, the following documents must be uploaded:

- An accompanying letter containing an overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application must be submitted to the FWF. This overview will not be passed on to the reviewers.
- A response to all reviews of the rejected application must be provided, even if one of the reviewers is to be excluded from reviewing the resubmitted application (see [section 3.2](#)) This response, consolidated in one document, will be forwarded to all reviewers reviewing the resubmission and should address the recommendations and criticisms included in the previous reviews as well as describe the resulting changes made.

While no deadlines for the resubmission of a rejected application apply, the respective application requirements do need to be taken into account. Resubmissions must be submitted as described in [section 2.5](#), i.e. as a separate, new application and not as a supplementary application to the previously rejected proposal.

## 2.5 Submission, file formats, and file names

The application must be submitted online at <https://elane.fwf.ac.at>.

To submit the application online, applicants need to create an account at the address shown above. All the necessary forms must then be filled out online; additional documents such as the content section can be uploaded. For additional information, please see the [elane user manual](#).

### 2.5.1 Required parts of the application

#### **a) File**

- *Proposal.pdf* (= content section incl. annexes 1 and 2, with PDF bookmarks for at least the major sections)

#### **b) Forms**

- *Application form*
- *Contact form*
- *Cost breakdown*
- *Academic abstract*
- *Co-authors*

## 2.5.2 File uploads, if applicable

- *Cover\_Letter.pdf* (= accompanying letter)
- *Negative\_list.pdf* (= list of reviewers who should be excluded)
- *Overview\_Revision.pdf* (= for resubmission, overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application)
- *Revision.pdf* (= for resubmission, response to all the reviewers of the previously rejected application)

It should be noted that any attachments in addition to the ones mentioned above will not be considered in further stages of the application process (such as letters of recommendation).

Once the application has been submitted, a PDF [cover sheet](#) will be generated automatically. The cover sheet also includes the declaration by the applicant.

The original cover sheet has to be sent to the FWF by conventional mail with the applicant's **handwritten signature** and **company stamp** (if the applicant is a company) or by email ([office@fwf.ac.at](mailto:office@fwf.ac.at)) with a scan of the signature using the applicant's **qualified electronic signature** ([\(ID Austria\)](#)).

The application is not considered officially submitted until the FWF receives the signed cover sheet as specified above.

## 3 Processing and decision-making

### 3.1 Submission and requests for changes

All of the documents specified above must be uploaded in full to [elane](#). Once an application has been officially submitted, the applicant can make no further changes to the application. All applications are checked for completeness and any formal errors by the FWF Office. The FWF's decision-making bodies reserve the right to return applications without review if they do not meet the FWF's formal requirements. The most common reasons why applications are returned without review are (a) ineligibility of the applicant (see [section 1.4.1](#)), (b) journals already converted to Plan S of cOAlition S (see [section 1.3](#)), and (c) that resubmissions have not been sufficiently revised (see [section 2.4](#)).

If the FWF Office identifies issues with the application that it considers to be rectifiable, it will notify the applicant, giving the opportunity to correct the problems within a reasonable period of time (generally 3 weeks). The requested changes are to be submitted to [elane](#) as a supplementary application. If the **requested changes** are not made and submitted as a supplementary application before the specified deadline, the decision-making bodies at the FWF will return the application without review.

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

### 3.2 Excluding reviewers

A list of a maximum of three potential reviewers who should not be consulted to review the proposal due to a possible conflict of interest can be uploaded as an additional document. The applicant must give reasons why they wish to exclude these reviewers. If the reasons for exclusion are professionally and technically sound, the FWF will generally fulfil the applicant's request to exclude those reviewers from the review process. A detailed description of the FWF's policy on conflicts of interest can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

### 3.3 Number of reviews required

One expert opinion is usually obtained.

### 3.4 Decision-making process

For detailed information on the decision-making process, the criteria for selecting international reviewers, detailed rules concerning conflicts of interest, and the composition of juries and review panels, please see the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

The **review process** for Academic Journals usually takes about six months. More detailed information is available online on the [FWF Dashboard](#).

When the review process is completed, the FWF considers the reviews and decides whether the application should be funded. The applicant is informed in writing of the FWF's decision.

### 3.5 Reasons for rejection

The reasons for rejecting an application are assigned to one of five categories (C1–C5) and sent to applicants along with the reviews; the applicant is also sent anonymized copies of the reviews. A detailed description of the reasons for rejection can be found in the [General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure](#).

### 3.6 Review of resubmissions

If the application is a resubmission of a previously rejected proposal, the FWF will generally contact those reviewers who provided *constructive* criticism on the previous application.

Reviewers who gave entirely positive or negative comments will not usually be contacted for a second review. However, please note that all resubmissions may also be evaluated by new reviewers.

### 3.7 Proposal bans

Applications that are rejected for reason C5 will be barred for 12 months (from the date of the official notification of the decision) and cannot be resubmitted during that period.

Applications that have been submitted three times and rejected for reasons C3 or C4 (i.e. the original application and two resubmissions) are also barred for 12 months (from the date of the official notification of the decision). Rejections for reasons C1 or C2 do not count towards this total. In principle, only topics are blocked and not applicants.

## 4 After approval

The FWF prepares a grant agreement between the FWF and the media owner for each application approved by the FWF.

The original grant agreement must be signed by the media owner or by an individual authorised to represent the media company digitally using [sproof.io](https://sproof.io). If the signatories not have their own digital signature (e.g. ID Austria), they can use services like [Evrotrust](https://evrotrust.com) (Apple, Android) to create a digital signature. An official photo ID (identity card or passport) is required. In addition, summaries in German and English must be sent to the FWF for public relations purposes<sup>3</sup>.

Payment shall be made in three instalments to an account held by the media owner: Half of the approved funding amount can be requested in writing after the conclusion (signing) of the agreement and after PR summaries in German and English have been sent; one fourth of the amount can be requested upon presentation and positive review by the FWF of a beta version or the like; and the remainder can be requested after a successful review of the academic journal for compliance with Plan S by the FWF.

Any suggestions or criticisms made by the reviewer must be verifiably taken into account when implementing the publication.

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<sup>3</sup> See: [Specifications for the preparation of PR summaries](#)

## **5 Compliance with legal requirements and standards of research integrity**

### **5.1 Legal regulations**

Please note that all individuals involved in the application are obligated to comply with all legal requirements, safety provisions, and any embargo regulations and sanctions (e.g., Federal Disability Equality Act, Federal Equal Treatment Act, Dual-Use Regulation [EU] 2021/821) and obtain all the necessary permits (e.g., from the Ethics Committee, the Animal Testing Commission, the National Heritage Agency, or the relevant foreign authorities).

### **5.2 Academic integrity**

The [Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice](#) of the [Austrian Agency for Research Integrity \(ÖAWI\)](#) apply.

If there is reason to believe that an applicant has failed to comply with these standards, the FWF will carry out a plausibility check in accordance with its own [procedure](#). Depending on the circumstances, the FWF can arrange for the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI) to carry out an investigation. The FWF reserves the right to suspend, in part or in whole, any procedures related to applications or ongoing projects until this check or investigation has been concluded.

The FWF is entitled to provide formal information on the procedure at the publisher's request. However, information on peer reviews conducted by the FWF is passed on only to the applicant.

## **6 Data protection and publication of application data and results**

### **6.1 Data protection**

Pursuant to Art. 6 (1) item a of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in conjunction with § 2g of the Austrian Research Organization Act (*Forschungsorganisationsgesetz*, FOG), the FWF processes and publishes personal data (e.g. the title of the submitted project, research institution, academic abstract, PR summaries) necessary for the administration of the funding by the FWF – while safeguarding business and trade secrets – for the purposes of research policy (e.g., presentation of the development of basic research in Austria, economic analyses, funding impact reports, etc.) and for public relations work (publication of excerpts in the FWF annual report, on the FWF website, in press releases,

media collaborations, etc.). If necessary, these data are also transmitted to third parties (e.g., for the preparation of research policy studies, on the basis of supervisory duties, in particular §§ 2d and 3a of the Research and Technology Funding Act [*Forschungs- und Technologie-förderungsgesetz*, FTFG], to bodies and agents of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and, in particular, pursuant to § 3 [2], § 4 [1], and § 13 [3] of the Court of Audit Act 1948 [*Rechnungshofgesetz* 1948 RHG], to the Austrian Court of Audit as well as to bodies and institutions of the European Union in accordance with European legal provisions). Transmission of data is also based on § 6 (1) item c of the GDPR in conjunction with § 2g of the FOG.

Further information on the data privacy rights of the applicant as well as the contact details of the FWF's data protection officers is available [here](#).

## 6.2 Publication of project data and results

Please note that if a grant is awarded, a PR summary in German and English will be published on the FWF website, as well as the grant amount and later, a link to the open-access archived publication. Summaries must be submitted to the FWF when the grant agreement is returned. Information on writing PR texts can be found [on the FWF website](#).

In presentations and the publication, applicants must comply with the relevant requirements on acknowledging the FWF as the funding institution.

## **7 Appendices to the Application Guidelines**

### **7.1 Appendix A: Template: Financial aspects**

Please describe the financial aspects **in English**, using the following structure, and append it to the application for the establishment or modernisation of an academic journal as Annex 1. Costs must be broken down and adequately justified for each point below.

Please note that in the event of approval, the funding amount will be paid out to an account held by the media owner in three instalments as cashless payment transactions.

Information on the funding requested:

- Explain briefly why the personnel requested is needed
- Explain briefly why the non-personnel costs applied for are justified (materials and other costs).



## 7.2 Appendix B: Notes and questions for reviewers in the programme Academic Journals<sup>4</sup>

In the Academic Journals program, the FWF provides funding for the establishment or modernisation of an academic journal with a lump sum grant of up to €50,000.

All funded academic journals must meet the minimum requirements for publication formats of [Plan S of cOAlition S](#)<sup>5</sup>.

Please review the current proposal<sup>6</sup> based on following seven assessment criteria:

- 1) Journal's potential for high international visibility
- 2) Quality of the scientists involved
- 3) Implementation of the requirements of Plan S
- 4) Appropriateness of budgeted costs
- 5) Sustainable long-term funding
- 6) Ethics and sex-specific, and gender-related aspects
- 7) Overall evaluation

For each of these criteria except 6) we ask you for both written comments and a rating on a scale from "outstanding" to "poor." Please be aware, however, that the FWF's funding decision will be based primarily on reviewers' written assessments rather than the ratings assigned.

### Section 1: Remarks for the applicant

#### 1) Journal's potential for high international visibility

Will the journal have a broad international reach and address appropriate target groups? What are the unique features of the journal? What importance does the journal have for the scientific community in the research field and beyond?

#### 2) Quality of the scientists involved

Are the journal editors and editorial board qualified to run the journal? Is the quality assurance procedure (e.g., editorial policy, peer review, ethical standards) appropriate?

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<sup>4</sup> Further information can be found on the FWF website: [FWF's mission statement and values](#) or the [Application Guidelines for Academic Journals](#)

<sup>5</sup> *Common requirements for all publication venues* <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

<sup>6</sup> The proposal must meet the FWF's formal requirements, and we ask you to please bear these in mind when writing your review. (Key formal requirements: max. 12 pages for the application of the establishment or modernisation of an academic journal, incl. figures, tables, etc. For more, please see: [Application Guidelines for Academic Journals](#)).

### 3) Implementation of the requirements of Plan S

Have the *common requirements*: Part III, 1.1 and *specific conditions*: Part III, 1.2. of Plan S of the cOAlition S (see: [Principles and Implementation, Part III: Technical Guidance and Requirements](#)) been satisfactorily fulfilled?

### 4) Appropriateness of budgeted costs

Is the funding requested from the FWF appropriate? Is all additional financial support from sources other than the FWF appropriate?

### 5) Sustainable long-term funding

Is the business model or the institutional commitment for the long-term funding of the journal suitable and feasible?<sup>7</sup> Will the institutions, professional societies, publishers, or other providers of the journal be able to ensure the continued existence of the journal?

### 6) Ethics and gender aspects

- *Ethics*: Have ethical considerations been addressed satisfactorily?
- *Gender*: Have sex-specific and/or gender-related aspects been addressed satisfactorily?

### 7) Overall evaluation

What is your overall impression of the proposal? Specifically, what would you consider its key strengths and weaknesses? Please give reasons for your answers, taking as much space as you need.

## Section 2: Confidential remarks to FWF

Please use this space to make any comments that you do not wish to be conveyed to the applicant(s). Feel free to also give us feedback about the evaluation process and your interactions with us.

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<sup>7</sup> After the initial funding, at least six years of funding must be ensured for the continued existence of the journal.