

Information on the application process for a DFG Research Training Group

General information on the application procedure

You can submit a proposal for a [DFG Research Training Group \(RTG\)](#) at any time. Please contact the DFG (programme director for RTGs in Hamburg: [Dr. Anna Böhme](#); anna.boehme@dfg.de). The application procedure consists of two stages: in the 1st stage, a draft proposal (15 pages for an RTG, 20 pages for an [international research training groups \(IRTG\)](#)) is submitted to the DFG via the elan-Portal. The formal application is submitted by the university and required prior approval by the UHH president. Based on the draft proposal and the written reviews, the responsible scientific review board (*Fachkollegium*) decides whether a full proposal should be submitted.

If you receive a request to prepare a full application, you can submit – in consultation with the responsible RTG programme director – a full proposal (RTG: 55 pages, IRTG 65 pages) to the DFG head office. Part of the review process for a full proposal is an on-site visit after which the DFG grants committee makes the final decision on the establishment of the RTG.

Notes on the proposal content

The DFG points out that the focus of an RTG is the qualification of doctoral researchers within the framework of a thematically focused research programme and a structured qualification concept. An interdisciplinary profile combining scientific expertise from different fields is desired. The aim is to support early academic independence of doctoral students and to prepare them for the complex science job market.

Information on how to submit a proposal can be found in the relevant information sheets on the DFG webpage ([RTG Forms and Guidelines](#)). Applying for an IRTG requires particularly intensive preparation and close coordination with all sites and stakeholders. When preparing a proposal for an international format IRTG, particular attention should be paid to the DFG's guidelines on its delineation from a RTG.

Notes on the time schedule

The meetings of the DFG review boards (draft proposal) and the DFG Grants Committee (full proposal) set the frame for our internal planning and processes. The Grants Committee ultimately decides which RTG will be funded. These meetings only take place twice a year at the DFG (usually early May and early November).

Until the final approval of an RTG proposal, the two-stage procedure – from the first idea to the start of funding – takes approximately two years. When submitting an RTG application, early coordination within the university (Vice President for Research, the support service for early

career researchers in Department 4 and the Dean's Office(s) and, if applicable, external partners) is essential. We will assist you as best as we can with this coordination as well as timely contact with the DFG Head Office.

Exemplary RTG application procedure

1st stage: RTG draft proposal

Process step	Time and duration
Initial counselling by Department 4, <u>Section 43</u> “Early Career Support” regarding timelines, procedures, project focus and other aspects.	With the initial idea, when starting the application
Ongoing counselling and support from Sec. 43	
Discussion on the RTG focus and the status of the draft proposal with the Vice President for Research (VP3) and the Dean's Office	Following initial contact with Sec. 43
Presentation of the project idea based on the “ <i>Project Outline</i> ” form	
Further elaboration of the RTG draft proposal	Approx. 3-6 months
Clarification of the job availability of all PIs involved and other resource issues (number of PhDs, rooms, equipment, etc.) with the faculty, the Dean's Office and Sec. 43	In parallel to preparing the application
External pre-assessment of the prefinal draft proposal by two "critical friends", in consultation with Sec. 43	Approx. 3-4 weeks
Review of the prefinal version of the draft proposal and feedback by the deanery and Sec. 43	In parallel
Integration of the recommendations and feedback from the critical friends, from the deanery and Sec. 43	Approx. 1 week
Submission of the final draft proposal to Sec. 43 and second meeting with the vice president VP3 to prepare the <i>Präsidiumsbeschluss</i> (presidium referral) and clarification of support requirements from the faculty and/or central UHH, if necessary	Approx. 2 weeks
Preparation of the <i>Präsidiumsbeschluss</i> and after approval by the presidium: Submission of the draft proposal to the DFG by the designated spokesperson (via elan-Portal). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The final draft proposal must be submitted to Sec. 43 at the latest one week before the presidium's meeting to ensure timely submission of all required documents to the president's office 	One week before the presidium's meeting
Issue of a receipt document by the DFG (elan-Portal) for signatures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → (Digital documents are sufficient!) → Sign this document as the RTG spokesperson → Forward this document to Sec. 43 for obtaining the <u>president's signature</u> → Transmission of the signed receipt to the DFG → CC to the RTG spokesperson 	Approx. 1 week



Evaluation of the draft proposal by the DFG, based on written reviews and decision in the responsible DFG review board. <u>If successful:</u> invitation to submit a full proposal	Approx. 8 months
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2nd stage: RTG full proposal

Process step	Time and duration
Contacting Department 4, <u>Section 43</u> “Early Career Support” after the DFG’s decision and forwarding of the reviews on the RTG draft proposal. Ongoing counselling and support from Sec. 4	Immediately after receiving the DFG’s decision
Meeting with the Vice President for Research, the Dean’s Office and Sec. 43 to evaluate and discuss the DFG expert reviews on the RTG draft proposal and to clarify required faculty / central UHH support	Dated approx. 1-2 weeks after receiving the reviews
Elaboration of the RTG full proposal	Approx. 6 months
If necessary, renewed clarification of the job availability of the PIs involved and other resource issues (number of PhDs, rooms, equipment, etc.) with the Dean’s Office and Sec. 43	In parallel to preparing the application
External pre-assessment of the prefinal proposal by two “critical friends”, in consultation with Sec. 43	Approx. 3-4 weeks
Review of the prefinal version of the proposal and feedback by the deanery and Sec. 43	In parallel
Integration of the recommendations and feedback from the critical friends, from the deanery and Sec. 43	Approx. 1-2 weeks
Meeting with the Vice President for Research and the Dean’s Office: Joint evaluation and discussion of the reviewers, the final application and possible central support	Approx. 1-2 weeks
Submission of the final proposal to Sec. 43 Sec. 43: preparation of the <i>Präsidiumsbeschluss</i> (presidium referral) and the presidium’s approval for the submission → The final proposal must be submitted to Sec. 43 at the latest one week before the presidium’s meeting to ensure timely submission of all required documents to the president’s office	One week before the presidium’s meeting
After approval, submission of the draft proposal to the DFG by the designated spokesperson (via elan-Portal).	
Issue of a receipt document by the DFG (elan-Portal) for signatures → (Digital / Electronic signatures and scanned documents are sufficient!) → Sign this document as the RTG spokesperson → Forward this document to Sec. 43 for obtaining the <u>president’s signature</u> → Transmission of the signed receipt to the DFG → CC to the RTG spokesperson	Approx. 1 week
Sec. 43: Forwarding of the full proposal to the BWFGB	After submission



Coordination of the <u>date for the DFG-panel on-site visit</u> at the UHH by the designated spokesperson with the DFG and with Sec. 43 Sec. 43: Forwarding of the information to the BWFGB	After submission
Evaluation of the proposal by the DFG	Approx. 6-8 months
RTG spokesperson and Sec. 43: planning and execution of rehearsals to prepare the on-site visit of the DFG review panel	3-4 weeks before the on-site visit
Organisation of the on-site visit by the spokesperson and the group of applicants (room bookings, catering, if necessary hotel bookings, shuttle service etc.)	In parallel
On-site visit of the DFG review panel	
Announcement of the DFG's decision	May / November
Inform VP3; in case of a positive decision, additional information to Dept. 2 for a press release	

Contact Sec. 43: Dr. Julia Schiemann

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