



## Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups Programme Fact Sheet for Applicants and Helmholtz Centres

**10 March 2017:** Internal deadline for the submission of application papers to Helmholtz Centres by the young researchers

**5 May 2017:** Deadline for the submission of complete applications by Helmholtz Centres to the Bonn office (reference date for the 2-6 years after receiving the doctorate)

**10 August 2017:** Deadline for the submission of the joint statement by the university and Helmholtz Centre ([Appendix 5](#)) to the Bonn office

**4-5 September 2017:** Final selection meeting in Berlin

**12 months at the latest after receiving the funding approval the young investigator group has to start its work**

### Eligibility criteria

- Eligible applicants are scientists with 2 to max. 6 years' research experience after receiving their doctorate, that is post-doctoral experience of at least two years is required (reference date = 5 May 2017). Parental and maternity leave periods in the postdoc phase will be taken into consideration for up to two years per child. These periods must be indicated in the CV. Exceptions may be made in special cases (for example longer periods of education for dual-qualified postdocs in medicine or excellent achievements immediately after finishing the PhD).
- Who is eligible in terms of international experience:
  - a) German applicants who have substantial international research experience: that is, a continuous stay abroad of at least six months as part of doctoral or post-doctoral studies is required. The acquisition of an academic degree in combination with a minimum 6-month stay abroad is as well acceptable as the coordination of a major international research project or significant involvement in major international research cooperation (see also "frequently asked questions" – [Appendix 1](#)).
  - b) International candidates from non-German research organizations
  - c) Junior scientists with children, who are already working as postdocs at a Helmholtz Centre since becoming a postdoc and where international mobility may be restricted for practical reasons, are encouraged to apply.
- Applicants who are not permanently employed at a Helmholtz Centre at the time of application will be preferred where applicants are equally qualified.
- Applicants who have already received a professorship at a German or foreign university at the time of application are not eligible for funding.

**Applications will only be considered if they fulfill all criteria listed above: 2 to max. 6 years after finishing the PhD, international research experience, complete application (all necessary appendices and documents except [Appendix 5](#) are included), list of independent referees. In case a Helmholtz Centre would like to promote a candidate who does not meet all the criteria, a written statement including reasons for promoting this candidate has to be submitted to the Helmholtz Head Office before the deadline of 5 May 2017. The Head Office will decide whether an application for the candidate can**

**be submitted. In case of submitting an incomplete application or submitting a list of biased referees (see Appendix 6), the application may be excluded from the following selection process.**

#### **Application and selection process (Appendix 4)**

- The candidate must apply to the Centre by **10 March 2017**, including CV, list of publications and a brief outline of the planned work programme (letter of intent, max. 2 pages). It is recommended to contact the given contact persons by phone to discuss the application (Appendix 7).
- Each Helmholtz Centre carries out a transparent pre-selection process. An account of this process must be included in later application documents. To provide a long-term overview of the degree of interest in this funding measure for the Senate and Financing Partners, the Centre must include a statistical overview of the number of applications received and those rejected internally (sample document will be sent separately to contact person).
- The partner university should be involved in the selection process at an early stage, especially where a joint appointment is planned to ensure the integration of the Young Investigator Group leader into the faculty regarding teaching and supervision of PhD students (Appendix 8). Where foreign applicants do not yet have a close cooperation with a university, a possible future university should be involved by the Centre as early as possible. The Centre should send the application documents of possible candidates on to the relevant faculty via the principal's office.
- The faculty has to confirm the rights and responsibilities of the candidate. A sample declaration form for universities is included in Appendix 5. In addition, the university and the faculty must provide a written statement on the eligibility of the candidate for appointment to a professorship, following consultation with the Centre. **The faculty statement must reach the Head Office of the Helmholtz Association in Bonn by 10 August 2017 at the latest.**
- The Centre selects its nominees and asks them to submit the complete application documents required. Where a renewed application is concerned, a **separate** report is necessary that describes developments since the last application (Appendix 9). In this case it is advisable to contact the Head Office first. To alleviate handing of applications, each should be self-explanatory and contain all the necessary documents, that is, written statements of the Centre's Board and Head of Institute involved (facilities/infrastructure, partial funding, description of pre-selection process, supporting letter from host scientist). Each individual application must include at least a copy of these documents (in addition to cover sheet).
- The applicant is the host Helmholtz Centre. The complete application documents (including all appendices) must be submitted as PDF document (one document, list of reviewers and statistical overview of the pre-selection separate!), electronically via the Helmholtz Electronic Proposal Processing System for Applicants and Reviewers (<https://helmholtznet.de/antraege/default.aspx>) by **5 May 2017** at the latest (preclusion period). In addition one hardcopy must arrive at the Head Office of the Helmholtz Association (Ahrstrasse 45, 53175 Bonn, Germany) by 5 May 2016 at the latest.

#### **Requirements for complete application documents**

- **Separate cover sheet should include**
  - Title of the research group
  - Name, complete current address, email and telephone number of the candidate
  - Name and organisational unit of host scientist
  - 5-6 keywords (as a basis for the selection of reviewers)
  - Details of relevance to a Helmholtz programme

- **Short summary of the scientific part of the application in English and German (see Appendix 9)**
- **Scientific part to be subject to review (planned work programme of group)**
  - **Maximum of 20 pages (exclusion criterion) in English**
  - Statement on the relevance to a Helmholtz programme after prior consultation with the host scientist in the Centre. An additional statement on the relevance to the university/faculty's primary focus (after consultation with the host scientist at the university). The benefits to both institutions need to be explained clearly.
  - Presentation of clearly delineated work packages, important intermediary steps and milestones with a time schedule
  - An account of the planned cooperation and communication structures
- **Appendices**
  - 1. To be prepared by the applicant:**
    - Curriculum Vitae including nationality, date PhD obtained, exact dates of periods abroad
    - List of publications, citation index (h-index), academic distinctions and awards
    - Rough financial plan agreed with the Centre (see below and Appendix 10)
    - Declaration of agreement to pay the €3,800 fees for the "Leading your group" course at the Helmholtz Management Academy.<sup>1</sup> Please specify in advance whether these fees are to be paid wholly or in part by the host Helmholtz Centre (see below).
    - Declaration of current employment and term of contract;
    - Statements about whether the application is simultaneously being submitted to another organisation for funding; if so, please specify.<sup>2</sup>
    - List of suggested unbiased reviewers agreed with the Centre (see below and Appendix 6)
  - 2. To be prepared by the submitting Centre:**
    - Written confirmation by the board:
      - of the partial funding, if applicable together with a university
      - of the provision of necessary facilities/infrastructure (incl. furnishings and IT) for the group leader and the group members
      - where applicable: declaration of agreement to pay (in part) the €3,800 fees for the "Leading your group" course at the Helmholtz Management Academy (see footnote 1)
      - declaration that the aforementioned personnel development measures, training plan and career options (see below) have been discussed in detail with the applicant

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<sup>1</sup> This course was designed especially for the Helmholtz Association's new leaders of Young Investigators Groups. The course gives participants the ideal preparation for their new leadership responsibilities and supports them in successfully setting up their own group. The Academy course is intended for all new leaders of Young Investigators Groups to follow within the first two years of their funding period. The total fees for the course comprising four modules amount to €7,600 (as of January 2017), including accommodation and board at Liebenberg Manor, just outside Berlin.

Half of the fees will be paid by the Initiative and Networking Fund; this does not need to be included in the financial plan. Some Helmholtz Centres subsidise fees for Helmholtz Management Academy courses. Click on the following link for further information: [www.helmholtz.de/akademie](http://www.helmholtz.de/akademie).

<sup>2</sup> Candidates cannot be accepted into the Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups Programme if they are already receiving funding from a similar programme (such as the German Research Foundation's (DFG) Emmy Noether programme).

- pledge that the leader of the Young Investigators Group will have a fixed contact person (e.g. an experienced group leader) available to him/her during the initial stages, including the name of this person
- pledge that the group leader will be given the opportunity at least once a year to reflect on his/her own development and discuss further career prospects within a suitable framework (e.g. in a meeting with the institute's management and personnel development team)
- description of the internal pre-selection process, including statistical overview **(to be submitted as a separate document!)**
- o **concept for personnel development measures** and training plan for the applicant (if possible involving the participating partner university), including presentation of career options at the respective Helmholtz Centre, given a positive evaluation ([Appendix 3](#))
- o Supporting letter from the direct superior (e.g. Head of Institute), where applicable with reference to the above mentioned concept for personnel development
- o Financial plan of the direct project-related costs/expenses (see [Appendix 10](#)) for six years showing the annual breakdown for each party according to personnel costs, costs of materials and supplies, and investments (Helmholtz Centre), and personnel expenses, expenses of materials and supplies, and investments (University) respectively. Travel costs/expenses can be included in costs/expenses of materials and supplies. Overheads are not eligible.
- o List of up to six independent reviewers for the proposal. Reviewers located at a Helmholtz Centre must not be named. At least two female reviewers have to be named among the six names. Scientists who are the most well-known experts in their field ("big shots") should perhaps not be listed since it can be rather difficult to get reviews from those prominent experts.

This list with full contact details (including e-mail address) should be submitted with the proposal as a **separate document!** also giving the signed declaration that there is no conflict of interest (if applicable please declare connections which could possibly lead to conflicts of interests); criteria for independent reviewers are listed in [Appendix 6](#).

### **3. To be prepared by the university:**

- o a written statement by the university and the faculty:
  - on the rights and responsibilities (personnel and budget, assisting PhD students in the completion of their doctoral studies, taking on teaching assignments of  $\leq 4$  weekly teaching hours per semester, access to all necessary resources/infrastructure) according to the requirements of the individual state laws on higher education
  - on the eligibility of the candidate, recommending her/him for appointment to professorship

A sample declaration form for universities on the rights and duties of a Young Investigators Group leader can be found in [Appendix 5](#). The Helmholtz head office in Bonn should receive of this form before the selection meeting takes place. The submission deadline is on **10 August 2017**.

#### **The complete application is to be submitted in three PDF files:**

1. Application with appendices
2. List of up to 6 independent reviewers
3. The centre's selection statistics

**The application and appendices should be structured as follows:**

1. Letter from centre board
2. Cover sheet
3. Summary of scientific part in English and German
4. Scientific part of the application
5. Appendices
  - 5.1 CV of applicant
  - 5.2 List of publications with citations list
  - 5.3 Declaration of employment
  - 5.4 Statements about whether the application is simultaneously being submitted to another organisation
  - 5.5 Financial plan
  - 5.6 Declaration of agreement to pay fees for the “Leading your group” course
  - 5.7 Supporting letter from direct superior
  - 5.8 Concept for personnel development measures
  - 5.9 Declaration by university

**Additional Information:**

The funding period for the Young Investigators Group is 6 years.

The funding of a Young Investigators Group amounts to a minimum of **300,000 Euros a year**. This includes:

- the position of group leader, as a rule according to E 14/15 TVöD / BAT Ib/Ia,
- scientific or technical staff (three or four on average),
- expenses of materials and supplies and investments.

The proportionate funding from the President’s Initiative and Networking Fund amounts to € 150.000 per year. The remaining costs will be covered by the host Centre and the partner university; both parties are expected to participate in the funding.

**Additional support during family phase:**

If a Young Investigators Group leader takes parental leave or starts working part-time, or works part-time for a given period following parental leave, additional funding can be applied for from the Initiative and Networking Fund.

The position as deputy leader can be taken on by a postdoc who is sufficiently familiar with the project. He/she will lead the group in consultation with the group leader, guarantee the supervision of doctoral students and make administrative decisions. Taking on this position is attractive for a postdoc, as it will give him/her greater visibility within the group and enable him/her to gain leadership experience. A further incentive is an increase in salary – the additional funds for this coming from the Initiative and Networking Fund – and the participation in the Helmholtz Academy. The group leader can decide individually which responsibilities he/she wishes to delegate for the given period, and which he/she may possibly wish to retain him/herself. (For example, availability for the group one day a week.)

After three to four years the Centres run an evaluation of the Young Investigators Group, where applicable after consultation with the partner university. The decisions about whether the group is to be made permanent and about the group leader’s future career is based on the result of that evaluation.

At the same time, the centre must conduct a **career talk** with the group leader. This talk must be documented and signed by both parties and submitted to the head office.

The Initiative and Networking Fund cannot release the funds for the fifth/sixth year until the evaluation report has been submitted with a corresponding statement from the Helmholtz Centre concerned. The statement should include an outline of how the career of the leader of the Young Investigators Group is expected to develop.

Please note: with the acceptance of funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund of the Helmholtz Association, scientists agree to make scholarly publications originating entirely or in parts from results of the funded project available to everyone in a freely accessible archive (repository), no later than six months after the original publication. If there are good reasons, the open access publication may be waived. These reasons have to be put forward to the Helmholtz Association immediately after they have become apparent.

Funding will be on the basis of a financing contract between the Helmholtz Association and the host Centre. The Helmholtz contribution will be paid as a fixed sum which is not repayable and is granted on the basis of the regulations NKBF 98 which will be included as a term of the contracts.