

## Appendix 4

### FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

#### Application

##### *Who can submit the application?*

- The applicant is the Helmholtz Center. One German and one foreign university are required as partners. Additional university partners are permitted but explicit reasons for this must be given. The inclusion of additional strategic partners (e.g. in science, business, society etc.) is welcomed.

##### *Do the international partners have to meet specific criteria?*

- The international partners must be entitled to award doctorates in their own countries. There are no criteria relating to the international partner's country of origin.
- What is important is that the partners are a good match in scientific terms. The partner institutions should complement each other, giving rise to synergy effects that will increase research performance and pave the way to leadership in the most innovative research areas. The partnerships should also generate added value for the professional and interdisciplinary skills and the career development of the PhD students.

##### *Is another call for applications planned for next year?*

- It is not yet clear whether similar calls will be published within the next years.

##### *Which doctoral regulations form the basis for the award of the doctorate?*

- The German universities and/or the foreign partners are entitled to award the doctorates. We assume that the doctorates will be awarded in compliance with the regulations of the universities involved. The possibility of awarding a joint doctorate (cotutelle agreement) must be considered.
- When drawing up the agreements, the partners must ensure that the program can be integrated into existing educational and examination ordinances, statutory frameworks, and the respective schedules (e.g. study duration, time of selection/admission, times at which students are obliged to attend compulsory events etc.). This must be explained in the application.

##### *What are the criteria relating to funding for PhD students?*

- Payments should amount to at least 65% of an E13 post as defined in TVöD (the German Public Salary Agreement). No fellowships may be paid from the funds awarded by the Initiative and Networking Fund.
- In general, care must be taken to ensure compliance with the "Helmholtz PhD Guidelines" (cf. Appendix 6).

##### *What must be considered when appointing the doctoral committee?*

- Doctoral students are usually supervised by three post-doctoral scientists forming a doctoral committee or by comparable structures. One supervisor assumes most of the responsibility (primary supervisor), while the others act in a supporting and advisory capacity.

- It is recommended that the doctoral committee at the Helmholtz International Research School includes scientists from the Helmholtz Center, the German university, and the international partner.

#### *What is meant by appropriate financial involvement on the part of the international partners?*

- The applicants are expected to provide funding to an overall amount at least equivalent to the monies awarded, with an appropriate contribution being made by the partner institution abroad. The international partner can for example fund the part of the project based in the respective country (stays, events and courses). A substantial percentage (min. 30 %) of the participants should come from the partner institution abroad. Ideally the percentage of participants from each country should be equal.
- The international partners' commitment must be described in the application and will be taken into account during the review process.

## Assessment & Selection

#### *What criteria are used when making the selection?*

- The scientific program, the added value of the cooperation for the partners, the educational and supervision concept, and the structure and framework of the Helmholtz Research International School for which funding is being requested are all taken into account during the selection procedure (cf. Notes on the Call for Applications, [Appendix 1](#)).

#### *What happens during the selection procedure?*

- The selection procedure encompasses several phases (cf. diagram of selection procedure in [Appendix 5](#)). During the first phase, a minimum of 2 written assessments are obtained from independent external experts for each application. An internal selection meeting attended by the President is then held on the basis of these reviews.
- The applicants with positive written assessments are subsequently invited to a selection meeting in Berlin, where they are required to present their application to a selection panel chaired by the President. The panel subsequently selects the applications that are to be granted funding. A representative of the international partner is expected to participate.

#### *Who are the members of the selection committee?*

- The selection committee is interdisciplinary, made up of scientific experts and experts in graduate education.

#### *How long does it take for a decision to be made?*

- Applicants are informed of the decision on the day after the meeting.

## Implementation

### Use of monies awarded from the Initiative and Networking Fund

#### *Can fellowships be awarded from the funding provided?*

- No fellowships may be paid from the funds awarded by the Initiative and Networking Fund.

### *What percentage of the funding awarded can/should be used for doctoral student posts?*

- There are no specifications concerning the percentage of monies from the Initiative and Networking Fund to be used for doctoral posts. This must be planned by the applicant depending on the funds needed to set up and run the Research School.

### *Can funds be transferred to the foreign partner?*

- The Initiative and Networking Fund only funds that part of the project based in the Federal Republic of Germany. Projects involving international cooperation are funded in accordance with the principle of reciprocity, i.e. the foreign share of the funding should be provided by the institution involved or by a funding body in the respective country.
- The following can be used as a guide: Funds spent in the Federal Republic of Germany, e.g. travel costs (flights) incurred when the PhD students travel to the foreign partner institution, costs of accommodating PhD students from the foreign partner institution at the Center, costs of events (e.g. retreats in Germany) can all be taken from the monies awarded.
- Costs incurred abroad, e.g. events in the partner institution's country, study fees payable by the German partner's PhD students at the foreign institution, or accommodation required for the exchange program, should not be covered by the monies awarded.

### *No net cash outflow abroad is permitted from the funding awarded – what does this actually mean?*

- In general, it must be ensured that there is no net cash flow abroad during the period covered by the funding. This means that if real money is sent across the German border to a foreign country and back, the cash flowing abroad must be balanced by cash flowing back to Germany.

### *Can the monies be used to finance investments?*

- In general, the funds awarded should not be used to finance larger investments. However, smaller purchases may be made, e.g. laptops for coordination purposes.

## Interim evaluation

### *When does the interim evaluation take place? What are the objectives of the evaluation procedure, and what does it consist of?*

- An interim evaluation of the International Research School usually takes place halfway through the six-year funding period, i.e. at the end of the third year of funding. This consists of a one-day inspection held on site at the Center responsible. One of the objectives of the evaluation procedure is to assess the successful establishment of the International Research School. Another is to give the Research School the opportunity to continue developing its scientific orientation and postgraduate education structures.
- The evaluation criteria are oriented on the funding criteria in the Call for Applications and encompass an assessment of the scientific program, the educational program, the supervision provided, and the program structure and framework.
- The School is evaluated by an independent committee of 3-4 experts on the basis of the assessment report and an on-site inspection at the Center. The experts' assessments and recommendations are summarized in an evaluation report containing suggestions for specific activities and measures that will promote the success of the School.

- In organizational terms, the evaluation is prepared and monitored by the member of Helmholtz Association's office staff responsible for the Helmholtz School in cooperation with the respective coordinators.

## Scientific publications

*What influence does the Helmholtz Association's Open Access guideline have on scientific publications?*

- On April 7, 2016, the Annual General Meeting of members of the Helmholtz Association passed a guideline on Open Access (<http://os.helmholtz.de/de/open-science-in-der-helmholtz-gemeinschaft/open-access-richtlinien/open-access-richtlinie-der-helmholtz-gemeinschaft-2016/open-access-policy-of-the-helmholtz-association-2016/>)
- On accepting the funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund, the scientists undertake to make any scientific publications based partly or fully on the results of the funded project generally available in a freely accessible archive (repository) within six months of initial publication. Open Access publication can be waived if important grounds exist. The Helmholtz Association must be notified of these as soon as the scientists become aware of them.