

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

of February 1, 2019

Helmholtz Distinguished Professorship – funding to recruit top-level international female scientists (W3)

from resources of the Joint Initiative for Research
and Innovation



Scientific management positions are the defining element of any research institution. As joint appointments with universities, they are also an important link between Helmholtz, non-university research organizations, and its university partners. Within the framework of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation, the Helmholtz Association is intensifying its efforts to attract excellent female scientists from abroad to these positions. Together with its funding bodies, it is continuing its successful recruitment initiative of recent years under the new “Helmholtz Distinguished Professorship” program.

A. Goal of the funding

Essentially, the aim of the funding instrument is to attract a top-level group of experienced, internationally recognized female scientists to Helmholtz and thus better take advantage of the potential of outstanding scientists. The strategic objectives of the Helmholtz Distinguished Professorship program are to enhance Helmholtz internationalization, increase the proportion of women at the upper levels of Helmholtz management, strengthen cooperation with partner universities, and establish and expand strategically relevant thematic areas by means of targeted recruitment. With respect to the target group, the central objectives are to support the appointment of excellent female scientists at the W3 level and create reliable career prospects by supporting permanent appointments only. The program's resources also create scope for financing and equipping the newly recruited scientists and expanding the options of the recruiting Helmholtz Centers and partner universities for creating additional positions.

B. Purpose and duration of the funding

The funding volume amounts to 600,000 euros per scientist per year and increases the basic funding of the recruiting Helmholtz Center. The funding can be used to finance the position and the relevant equipment. A prerequisite for funding is a concept for the use of the funds that details their deployment and, as applicable, additional services provided by the Helmholtz Center and the partner university. The jointly appointing institutions are expressly encouraged to come up with innovative offers to attract the target group (dual career measures, onboarding offers, etc.).

If funding is granted, appointment (presentation of the certificate of appointment) is a prerequisite for transferring funds to the budget of the recruiting Helmholtz Center. The funds are earmarked for this purpose and will be withdrawn if the person leaves during the first period of the Program-Oriented Funding in which she is recruited (de facto the program period starting in 2021) and the Center fails to fill the vacancy with a candidate who meets the criteria.

C. Target group and funding criteria

The funding program is aimed at highly distinguished female scientists who are currently conducting research at foreign institutions. This may also include female researchers of German nationality who have worked abroad in the last years (generally for at least the last three years). The Helmholtz Association stands for scientific excellence and expects successful candidates to demonstrate the same.

A fundamental prerequisite for the funding is that the nominated candidates are not yet employed at the Helmholtz Center submitting the application at the time of submission. Instead, the funding program is aimed at outstanding female scientists who are currently (that is, at the time the application is submitted) conducting research at foreign institutions. Another important prerequisite for the funding is that the nominated candidate is not appointed to the partner university before the Helmholtz Distinguished Professorship selection meeting. Nevertheless, beginning discussions regarding a joint appointment with the relevant partner university as soon as possible and reaching specific agreements regarding the next steps in the desired appointment procedure before the selection meeting are to be welcomed. This will in any case accelerate the planned appointment.

The most important selection criterion is the outstanding scientific performance of the applicants (CV, publications, citation index, awards, etc.). Other criteria are:

- Originality of the planned research work,
- An excellent international reputation on the part of the candidate,
- How well the candidate's research profile fits the applying Helmholtz Center and the research program,
- The joint commitment of the Helmholtz Center and the partner university to ensure the successful recruitment and establishment of the candidate. Questions of equipment, but also additional offers (such as dual career measures) and structural concerns (such as support for integration into university departments) are to be taken into account. A declaration of intent certified by the signature of the university management must be attached to the application. The status and further steps in the appointment procedure are also to be described.

D. Application procedure

The call for research-topic-independent applications will be issued internationally.

The application procedure involves several steps (see **Anlage 4**):

1. Interested female scientists should contact the Helmholtz Centers directly and get in touch with the contact persons indicated (see **Annex 3**). Conversely, the Helmholtz Centers are called upon to actively recruit suitable candidates.

2. As necessary, the Helmholtz Centers will make an internal pre-selection and enter into negotiations with their partner universities.
3. The applications for funding will then be jointly prepared by the Helmholtz Center and the candidate and submitted to the Helmholtz Head Office in Berlin via the Helmholtz Centers' Boards of Directors. Applications sent by candidates directly to the Helmholtz Head Office will not be accepted.
4. At least two written appraisals will be obtained for each application.
5. In the event that the program is greatly oversubscribed, the President reserves the right to make a pre-selection on the basis of the written reviewer appraisals that have been obtained.
6. No later than six weeks before the meeting of the reviewer panel, applying Helmholtz Centers will be informed of whether the relevant application is to be considered in the procedure's next step.
7. The final selection decision will be based on the recommendation of an independent, interdisciplinary panel of experts. Invitations for the candidates to give a personal presentation will be issued via the applying Helmholtz Centers about six weeks before the date of the selection meeting.
8. After the candidate's presentation (selection meeting), the Helmholtz Centers' Boards of Directors will be informed of the results of the funding decision.
9. Selected candidates must be appointed no more than 18 months after funding has been approved. Otherwise, the funding lapses.
10. Funding will be transferred to the budget of the recruiting Helmholtz Center after a copy of the certificate of appointment has been submitted and commencement of employment has been reported to the Helmholtz Head Office. The Head Office will promptly notify the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) that the funds have been approved.

E. Dates and deadlines

June 14, 2019: Deadline for submission of complete applications by the Helmholtz Centers to the Helmholtz Head Office in Berlin

October 11, 2019: Deadline for submission of the letter of intent by the university to the Helmholtz Head Office in Berlin

November 4 and 5, 2019: Final review panel session in Berlin

Not more than 18 months after funding approval: Deadline for submitting the copy of the certificate of appointment and start of funding

F. Documents to be submitted

Annex 1 is a template for preparing applications. **Using this template is a formal prerequisite for application submission.** A further prerequisite is that **all components of the application are in English.** Specifically, the following documentation must be submitted:

I. Letter from the Helmholtz Centers' Boards of Directors (separate document, English, PDF)

We ask that the letter from the Helmholtz Centers' Boards of Directors is written in English. The letter from the Board of Directors should address the following aspects:

- Strategic importance of the appointment for the Helmholtz Center, suitability for the Helmholtz program, and relevance to the research field,
- Resources commitment with reference to the financial plan,
- Assignment to a program or defined division into several programs,
- Information on the status of the arrangements with the candidate and the partner university.

II. Application based on the application template with the following structure/ components:

1. Overview of the application

- Stakeholders and thematic focus,
- Nominated candidate,
- Summary of the planned research program for the first five years.

2. Role of the activities of the nominated candidate in the strategy of the applying Helmholtz Center and the relevant Helmholtz research program(s) (max. 2 pages)

- Strategic goals of the appointment,
- collaboration and networking with universities and non-university research institutions.

3. Motivation of the nominated candidate (max. 2 pages)

- Motivation to join the Helmholtz Center,
- Motivation to join the partner university.

4. Curriculum vitae of the nominated candidate (max. 3 pages)

5. Description of the planned work program (max. 15 pages)

- State of the art and preliminary work,
- Objectives,

- Five-year work program including proposed research methods,
- Long-term research plans.

6. Financial plan

- Costs for the first five years with annual data on personnel costs, costs of materials and supplies, and investments. In the event of division into several programs, this must be clearly stated in the financial plan,
- Financing contributions by the Center and funding from resources of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation.

7. Publications and patents

- publication metrics,
- five selected key publications,
- publication list,
- patents (if applicable))

8. Declaration by the nominated candidate

9. Recommendation letter from the Scientific Advisory Board of the Helmholtz Center submitting the application (English, PDF) (max. 2 pages)

10. Letters of reference from Helmholtz external experts (English, PDF) (max. 2 pages each)

III. Proposal of six unbiased reviewers in the relevant field (separate document, English, PDF)

Please consider the notes in **Annex 2** and use the table listed there for naming the expert proposals.

IV. Partner university statement (separate document, English, PDF)

We ask that this statement is written in English. The partner university statement should address the following aspects:

- Intended appointment (denomination, integration into the department and any other relevant structures)
- Resources promised, if applicable planned dual career measures
- Appointment procedure outlook

The partner university statement must be submitted to the Helmholtz Head Office in Berlin by October 11, 2019 at the latest.

Single original copies of applications will be submitted by the board of directors of the Helmholtz Center to the President of the Helmholtz Association at the Helmholtz Head Office in Berlin, Anna-Louisa-Karsch-Str. 2, 10178 Berlin, Germany and transferred by **e-mail** to Daniel Riesenberg (daniel.riesenberg@helmholtz.de) by **June 14, 2019 at the latest** (with exception of the partner university statement, which must be submitted by October 11, 2019 at the latest).

Annexes

Annex 1: Application template (mandatory use)

Annex 2: Suggestion of six unbiased reviewers in the relevant field

Annex 3: Contact persons at the Helmholtz Centers

Annex 4: Overview of the selection procedure

Annex 5: FAQ