

General Application Guidelines

Date: January 2023

The Elite Network of Bavaria aims to increase the opportunities for outstanding early career researchers in Bavaria.

As part of efforts to develop the Elite Network of Bavaria's underlying concept, we have offered funding for **Junior Research Groups** since 2014 as the fifth pillar of our support for elite talent. Public universities can serve as host institutions.

In the **2023 call for applications**, funding will be awarded to up to **six** additional Junior Research Groups in **natural sciences, mathematics, engineering, informatics, and life sciences / medical sciences**.

The current call for applications is structured as follows:

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I. Basic information about the Junior Research Groups in the Elite Network of Bavaria

The Elite Network of Bavaria has established Junior Research Groups as its fifth funding line. Its aim is to ensure that Bavarian universities can attract or retain talented young researchers who have benefited from exceptional education through one of the Elite Network's two other funding lines, namely Elite Graduate Programs or International Doctorate Programs. This funding line enables Elite Graduate Programs and International Doctorate Programs to extend and/or round off their offering. Junior Research Groups also offer young researchers the opportunity to benefit from a particularly attractive academic environment.

An application following an international call for applications may be submitted following *prior* consultation with a researcher participating in one of the two aforementioned funding lines or on the participating researcher's initiative. The applicant must draw up an innovative, original and scientifically ambitious proposal for a project at the frontiers of knowledge in their respective discipline. The innovative strength of the Junior Research Group is particularly evident in a clear research program that promises to address desiderata from previous research with adequate methods and collaboration practices tailored to the group.

The host university is expected to provide suitable premises and basic equipment, enable access to the requisite infrastructure, and cover one-quarter of the material expenses. Furthermore, the university should make clear to the applicant the opportunities to access further funding in a later phase as well as ongoing career development at the university. Collaborative endeavours with non-university research facilities are possible and encouraged, provided that they are integrated into the funding lines. The terms offered to Junior Research Groups are highly competitive on the international stage.

A further requirement is that the Junior Research Group must be integrated into and supplement relevant Elite Graduate Programs or International Doctorate Programs. Only one Junior Research Group may be established per Elite Graduate Program or International Doctorate Program; however, there is no limit on the number of applications permitted.

As a fundamental principle, Junior Research Groups are established for a six-year term with funding from the Elite Network of Bavaria. Junior Research Groups must document their work and their achievements. A written interim evaluation will be conducted after three years.

In the case of an application for a director position in Grade 15 of the Collective Wage Agreement for the Civil Service, applicable at Länder-level (TV-L E 15), funding through the Elite Network of Bavaria is limited to junior researchers who have not worked at the guest institution to date or in the past two years.

In the case of a W1- or W2-level director position, the applicant should have completed their first post-doctoral phase at a different university than the host university. Furthermore, the host university must already have approved the applicant's appointment.

The program should enable Junior Research Group leaders to start to gain academic independence in a development phase immediately after completion of a post-doctoral phase. Therefore, suitably qualified persons may submit an application between two and five years after receiving their doctorate (having passed the oral examination).¹ Junior Research Group leaders have the freedom to use their research funding as they wish and decide themselves whether to raise third-party funds. They publish papers as the responsible author and decide on the appointment of staff paid from the project budget. They are expected to participate in supervising academic papers, such as bachelor's, master's and doctoral thesis, and, following agreement with the host university, in teaching in the context of "their" International Doctorate Program or Elite Graduate Program that would be beneficial to the Junior Research Group. The group's leader and the doctoral students must fulfil the minimum teaching commitments.

Women are encouraged to apply.

The position is suitable for severely disabled persons. Severely disabled applicants will be given preferential consideration in the case of essentially equal suitability and qualification.

¹ The date of the oral examination (start) and the submission deadline for the draft proposal (30 March 2023) are the basis for calculating the maximum term of 5 years. The cut-off date for the applicant's oral examination is therefore 30 March 2018. Parental leave and leave taken to care for relatives can be taken into account if documented and evidenced in the application (i.e. in the applicant's CV).

II. Selection procedure, application and responsibility for Junior Research Groups

In the two-stage selection procedure the applicant is to hand in a draft proposal at first. This draft has to demonstrate how the applicant will ensure that the substance of their proposal meets the high standards of Junior Research Groups. Once the International Commission² has issued positive evaluation of the draft proposal, the Elite Network of Bavaria's Coordination Office will invite the applicant to submit a full application. The full applications are assessed at a hearing in front of an expert review panel with participation of members of the International Commission of the Elite Network of Bavaria. The Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts then makes a decision based on the recommendation of the International Commission.

The draft proposal should demonstrate how the institutional form of the International Junior Research Groups is particularly suitable for the planned research program. It is comparable with an executive summary and should reference in particular the following details about the Junior Research Group:

- Responsible junior researcher (name, address), academic excellence demonstrated through publications (quality, quantity, originality), awards and prizes, international experience, third party funding and existing cooperations, etc.
- Clear expression of the central research program and its relevance in the context of the corresponding scientific research field
- Profile of the International Junior Research Group and additional value of collaborative research with regard to the research program
- Presentation of the methodology(s) planned for the implementation of the research program, also with regard to the specifics of a Junior Research Group
- Statement of preliminary work directly related to the research topic

² see [Elite Network: International Commission \(bayern.de\)](http://EliteNetwork:InternationalCommission(bayern.de))

- Information about the mentoring of the doctoral candidate within the International Junior Research Group as well as about previous mentoring experience of the junior researcher
- Integration into the university's profile and link-up with existing research facilities; description of the academic environment
- Nomination of the researchers also participating in an Elite Network of Bavaria funding line (name, Elite Graduate Program/International Doctorate Program, university), including a description of the planned cooperation respectively the actual points of contact with the corresponding Elite Graduate Program or International Doctorate Program
- Links to other universities and extra-university institutions
- Display of international collaborations relevant to the proposed International Junior Research Group.
- Integration in existing network structures (research association, federal and EU programs, Cumulative Research Centres, Research Training Groups, etc.)
- Potential for transferring research results (if applicable)
- Financial framework (funding requirements per year) / share covered by university in separate financing plan (see IV. Formalities).

The junior researcher applies independently as the leader of the Junior Research Group, and they alone are responsible for the draft proposal and the full application.

In order to submit a draft proposal, the applicant must first contact a relevant researcher already participating in the Elite Network of Bavaria, who is involved in the Elite Graduate Program or the International Doctorate Program within the Elite Network of Bavaria (see list under III.1.). This researcher explains in an accompanying letter of support how they will provide mentoring of the applicant and that they will provide further support.

III. Funding of Junior Research Groups

By supporting an application for a Junior Research Group, the university commits to provide its share of resources, appropriate premises with any basic equipment and apparatus that may be required, and to support the Junior Research Group on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the university must demonstrate, in as much detail as possible, what continuous career development opportunities will be open to the applicant at the host university following the funding phase. Written support from university management is not required until the full proposal is submitted, but should be agreed upon with the applicant prior to submitting the draft proposal.

1. Financial framework

Funding is available to establish a total of up to six new Junior Research Groups in the Elite Network of Bavaria at Bavarian universities from 2024. The new Junior Research Groups must be related to one of the following Elite Graduate Programs (ESG) or International Doctorate Programs (IDP) in natural sciences, mathematics, engineering, informatics, and life sciences / medical sciences:

(On our homepage www.elitenetzwerk.bayern.de you can find a complete overview of the Elite Network of Bavaria's Elite Graduate Programs under [Elite Network: Overview of Elite Graduate Programs \(bayern.de\)](#) and of the Elite Network of Bavaria's International Doctorate Programs under [Elite Network: Overview of International Doctorate Programs \(bayern.de\)](#).)

Elite Graduate Programs:

- **Advanced Materials and Processes** ([Elite Network: Advanced Materials and Processes \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Advanced Optical Technologies** ([Elite Network: Advanced Optical Technologies \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Advanced Signal Processing and Communications Engineering** ([Elite Network: Advanced Signal Processing and Communications Engineering \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Advanced Synthesis and Catalysis** ([Elite Network: Advanced Synthesis and Catalysis \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Bavarian Graduate School of Computational Engineering** ([Elite Network: Bavarian Graduate School of Computational Engineering \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Biological Physics** ([Elite Network: Biological Physics \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Biomedical Neuroscience** ([Elite Network: Biomedical Neuroscience \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Data Science** ([Elite Network: Data Science \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Global Change Ecology** ([Elite Network: Global Change Ecology \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Honours Degree in Technology Management** ([Elite Network: Honours Degree in Technology Management \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Human Biology** ([Elite Network: Human Biology \(bayern.de\)](#))

- **Integrated Immunology** ([Elite Network: Integrated Immunology \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Macromolecular Science** ([Elite Network: Macromolecular Science \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **MINT-Lehramt PLUS** ([Elite Network: MINT-Lehramt PLUS \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Neuro-Cognitive Psychology** ([Elite Network: Neuro-Cognitive Psychology \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Neuroengineering** ([Elite Network: Neuroengineering \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Physics Advanced with integrated graduate program** ([Elite Network: Physics Advanced with integrated graduate program \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Satellite Technology** ([Elite Network: Satellite Technology \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Scientific Computing** ([Elite Network: Scientific Computing \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Software Engineering** ([Elite Network: Software Engineering \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Theoretical and Mathematical Physics** ([Elite Network: Theoretical and Mathematical Physics \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **TopMath – Mathematics with Integrated Doctorate Program** ([Elite Network: TopMath – Doctoral Program in Mathematics \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Translational Medicine** ([Elite Network: Translational Medicine \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Translational Neuroscience** ([Elite Network: Translational Neuroscience \(bayern.de\)](#))

International Doctorate Programs:

- **Measuring and modelling mountain glaciers and ice caps in a changing climate (MOCCA)** ([Elite Network: Measuring and modelling mountain glaciers and ice caps in a changing climate \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Photo-Electro Catalysis (PEC)** ([Elite Network: Photo-Electro Catalysis \(PEC\) \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **The Proteomes that Feed the World** ([Elite Network: Proteomes that Feed the World \(bayern.de\)](#))
- **Future leaders in RNA-based Medicine (RNAMED)** ([PhD positions "RNAMED" | HIRI - Helmholtz Institute Würzburg | HELMHOLTZ HIRI \(helmholtz-hiri.de\)](#))

The Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts will make funding available for a position for the leader of the Junior Research Group, paid at Grade 15 of the Collective Wage Agreement for the Civil Service, applicable at Länder-level (TV-L E 15), as well as up to two doctoral positions paid at Grade 13 (TV-L E 13). It may also be appropriate to provide a share of the funding for the doctoral positions depending on the requirements of the subject area. The minimum level for a doctoral position is 2/3. In exceptional cases, which must be justified in detail, applicants may apply for (a share of the) funding for additional staff (e.g. technicians).

Applicants who have already completed a W1/W2-level appointment process at the host university may also apply for a W1/W2-level position as leader, subject to the following requirements:

- Holders of fixed-term junior or comparable qualification professorships (W1/W2) are eligible to apply if they are at an early phase in their academic career. It is not

possible to submit an application or proceed with an ongoing application following a positive interim evaluation.

- In the event that the applicant transfers to a W-level position offered by the Elite Network of Bavaria, the university commits to make any savings on staff costs for the no-longer occupied W-level position available to the Junior Research Group as additional funds for staff and material costs in addition to the university's share (25% of material costs).
- In the event that the applicant remains in the W-level position offered by the university, the value of the leader's W-level position in the Elite Network of Bavaria may also be used for staff and material costs incurred by the Junior Research Group (without a contribution to this from the university).
- A tenure-track option is not a requirement. However, the opportunities for continuous career development at the university must be outlined as clearly as possible and will be considered in the evaluation of the application.

The leader of the Junior Research Group and the doctoral students should render services in the fields of teaching, research and project management – but must ensure that such activities do not impact on their own research project. Therefore, the intended teaching commitments of the applicant and the doctoral students in the Junior Research Group should be set out at the latest when submitting the full application.

In addition to the staff budget, the funding also includes an additional budget for material resources, to which the host institution must contribute one-quarter.

In respect of the level of this additional funding, and due to the variety of the respective subject-specific requirements, appropriate additional equipment cannot be defined schematically but rather only subject to the requirements of the specific discipline and the Junior Research Group's target topic. All project-specific funding can be included in the application. A rough categorisation of funding is provided in the appendix entitled "Financing Plan (material costs)".³

³ The funding item "Miscellaneous" also allows applicants to apply for funds that cannot be allocated to any other category, e.g. compensation for test subjects, use of documentation services. Applicants may request funding for usage costs for large equipment and equipment centres where appropriate due to increased project-specific demand.

Applicants can use the figure of **€60,000 per year (plus the university's share)** as a rough guide for supplementary material costs. The exact amount depends largely on the justified needs in respective disciplines and internationally required standards.

It is also expected that the host university – together with any other scientific institutions involved in the Junior Research Group's work – will provide appropriate premises and basic equipment.

2. Use of funds

The funds to be provided must be used for the purpose of carrying out the research project. The leader of the Junior Research Group can decide independently on how these funds are used, on staff appointments and on whether to raise further third-party funding.

IV. Formalities

Draft proposals must meet the following formal requirements:

- Max. 10 pages (not incl. cover), Arial, size 12, single spaced
- Appendix attached, also max. 10 pages (without further explanation of content; only additional information on the applicant or evidence of his or her scientific excellence, e.g. curriculum vitae, list of publications, lectures or similar)
- Indication of the exact date of the doctorate (oral examination) in the CV
- Financing plan in table form; Please use the given Excel chart, which is available at the following link:
https://www.elitenetzwerk.bayern.de/fileadmin/NFG/Ausschreibungsunterlagen_2023.zip
- Draft proposals may be submitted in German or in English
- The draft proposal, incl. all additional documents must be submitted via email (max. file size 20 MB) in PDF format; The documents should be merged into a single PDF document and sorted in the following order:

1. Draft proposal
2. Appendix
3. Letter of support by scientist involved in the Elite Network of Bavaria
4. Financing plan

Furthermore, we kindly ask you to submit the financing plan again separately in EXCEL format.

- It is mandatory that the draft proposal includes the scanned signature of the applicant and that the letter of support includes the scanned signature of the participating researcher at the host university.
- Send via email to:
elitenetzwerk-bayern@stmwk.bayern.de

Address of recipient:

Geschäftsstelle des Elitenetzwerks Bayern
Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst
Salvatorstr. 2
D-80333 München

- If any queries regarding the submission of draft proposals occur, please contact Susanne Böh (email: Susanne.Boeh@stmwk.bayern.de; tel.: +49 (0)89 2186-2269) or Fabienne Delacroix (email: Fabienne.Delacroix@stmwk.bayern.de; tel.: +49 (0)89 2186-1866) at the Coordination Office.

V. Dates

- Draft proposals must be submitted at the latest by 30 March 2023 (cut-off date).
- Selection by the International Commission and requests for full applications in early summer
- Full applications must be submitted at the latest by 25 August 2023 (cut-off date).
- Assessment hearings by the expert committees will take place in autumn 2023.
- Funding decision is expected in December 2023.
- Funded Junior Research Groups can start work from 2024.