



Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS

CULTIVATING TALENTS

REALISING NEW IDEAS

**FUNDING
THE WAY FORWARD**

Funding opportunities at FWF

MCAA Annual conference

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Simone Recchi

(simone.recchi@fwf.ac.at)

Funding opportunities at FWF

Contents

- Overview of FWF activities and funding portfolio
- Information on specific programmes
- Application guidelines including some tips and tricks

The FWF's corporate policy: Mandate and mission

The FWF's mission is to promote:

- High-quality research designed to generate new knowledge (basic research)
- Education and training through research
- Science and research communication, research culture and knowledge transfer

The FWF funding portfolio



Exploring new frontiers – Funding of top-quality research

Stand-Alone Projects
International Programmes

Special Research
Programmes (SFBs)

Research Groups

START Programme

Wittgenstein Award



Cultivating talents – Development of human resources

Young Independent
Researcher Groups (YIRG)
Doc.funds Programme
Erwin Schrödinger Programme
Lise Meitner Programme
Hertha Firnberg Programme
Richter Programme/Richter
PEEK



Realising new ideas – Interactive effects between science and society

KLIF

PEEK

Support for Scientific
Publications

Science Communication
Programme

Top Citizen Science

The FWF funding portfolio



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Top Citizen Science

FWF funding categories by career stage

For established researchers

- Wittgenstein Award

With postdoc experience

- Independent applicant (FWF-Fellow)
- Elise Richter Programme (inkl. Richter-PEEK)
- START Programme
- Lise-Meitner-Programme

Postdoctoral work

- Postdocs
- Erwin Schrödinger Programme
- Hertha Firnberg Programme
- Lise-Meitner-Programme
- Independent applicant (FWF-Fellow)

During Ph.D. studies

- Ph.D. student positions
- Ph.D. students in DK programmes/doc.funds

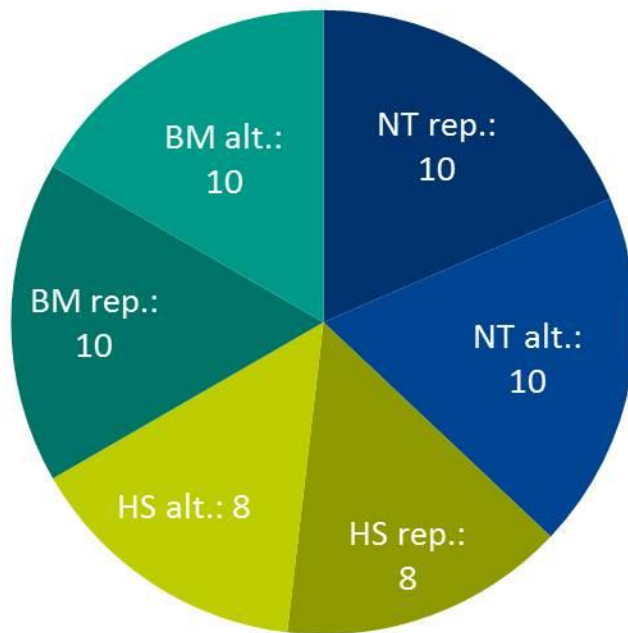
During university studies

- Student employees

The "heart" of the FWF funding machine

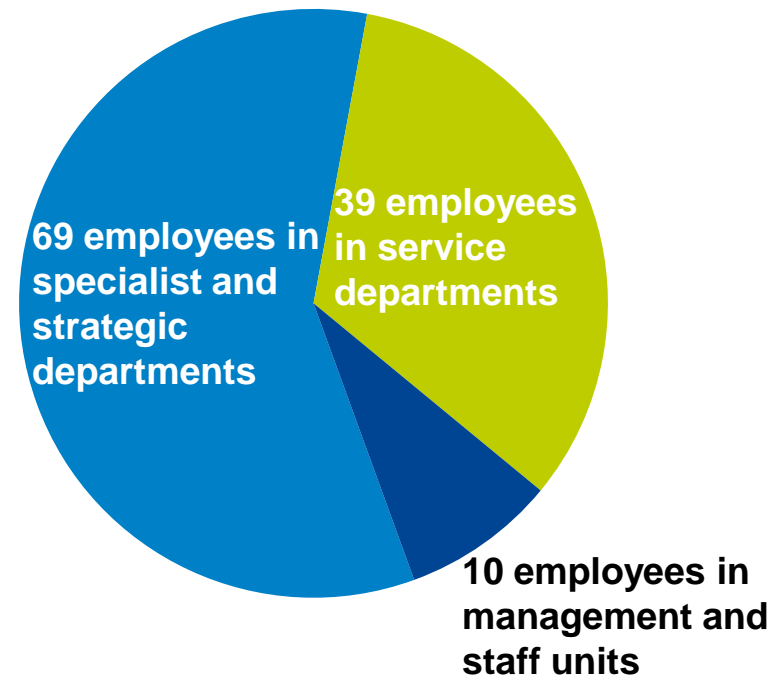
▪ FWF Board

28 reporters,
28 alternates
(all university professors)



▪ FWF Office

118 Employees – about 2/3 for direct project support



NT: Natural sciences and engineering; **HS:** Humanities and social sciences; **BM:** Biology and medicine

Promotion of top-quality research

Stand-Alone Projects



Stand-Alone Projects – Basic information (I)

- **Programme**
 - Research projects limited to **4** years' duration
- **Submission**
 - on a rolling basis.
- **Project leader**
 - (if employed at an Austrian research institution) ⇒ international publications commensurate to academic age
- **Independent applicants** (" FWF fellows") ⇒ Personnel costs for project leader are financed from the project budget.
Prerequisite: Fulfilment of **territoriality principle**, that is, the applicant's main residence must have been in Austria for at least 3 of the last 10 years, or the applicant must have been working in science in Austria for at least 2 consecutive years prior to submitting the application.

Stand-Alone Projects – Basic information (II)

- **Salaries**
 - FWF Fellow / "independent applicant": Postdoc- or Senior Postdoc employees
- **Project collaborators**
 - Postdoc, Ph.D. student employees, student assistants, BMA, CTA and TF
- **Number of reviews**
 - Min **2** reviews, depending on the individual project-specific costs
- **Processing time**
 - 3 to 6 months, Ø 4.3 months

Content of project descriptions

- **Quality of the project**
 - Position/value in international research landscape
 - Innovative aspects
 - Significance of expected results
 - Clarity of research goals (hypotheses)
 - Appropriateness of the methods chosen (including work/time planning)
 - Quality of cooperation arrangements (national and international)
- **Quality of human resources**
 - Scientific quality / potential of the scientists involved and significance of project for their career development
- **Financial aspects**
 - Information on the research institution and the funding requested

Questions to reviewers

Section 1 (to be transmitted to the applicant in its entirety):

1. Level of originality or scientific/scholarly innovation of the application
2. Scientific/scholarly quality of the proposal
3. Approach/methods and feasibility of the proposal
4. Research-related qualifications – in relation to the length of their careers – of the researchers involved

Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Poor
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5. Other aspects:
 - Ethical aspects
 - Sex-specific and gender-related aspects

Questions to reviewers

6. Concluding evaluation with regard to key strengths and weaknesses; final funding recommendation

	Excellent – funding with highest priority
	Very Good – funding with high priority
	Good – resubmission with some revisions
	Average – resubmission with major revisions
	Poor – rejection

Please note that the FWF places high demands on the quality of the projects it funds and thus predominantly supports projects rated as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

Section 1b (optional remarks to the applicant)

Reviewer's recommendations to the applicants for implementing the project (in the case of approval). The recommendations made here generally should not play a role in the funding decision.

Section 2 (confidential remarks to the FWF)

Other comments intended solely for the FWF

Details on the formal assessment (ratings) (I)

Excellent = funding with highest priority

The proposed research project is among the best 5% in the field worldwide. It is potentially groundbreaking and/or makes a major contribution to knowledge.

The applicant and the researchers involved possess – relative to their academic age – exceptional qualifications by international standards.

Very Good = funding with high priority

The proposed research project is among the best 15% in the field worldwide. It is at the forefront internationally, but minor improvements could be made.

The applicant and the researchers involved possess – relative to their academic age – high qualifications by international standards.

Details on the formal assessment (ratings) (II)

Good = resubmission with some revisions

The proposed research project is internationally competitive but has some weaknesses, and/or the applicant and the researchers involved possess – relative to their academic age – good qualifications by international standards.

Average = resubmission with major revisions

The proposed research project will provide some new insights but has significant weaknesses and/or the applicant and the researchers involved possess – relative to their academic age – fair qualifications by international standards.

Poor = rejection

The proposed research project is weak and/or the applicant and the researchers involved lack sufficient qualifications by international standards.

Standardised reasons for rejection

(I)

1

The reviews of your application were entirely positive with regard to the research project itself as well as your research qualifications. However, the reviewers expressed even greater support for other applications. For budget-related reasons, the FWF can currently only approve those applications which receive the most favourable reviews and ratings; this means that your application could not be approved. If you choose to resubmit your application, please place greater emphasis on the strengths of the project in order to improve your chances of approval.

2

The reviews of your application were predominantly positive with regard to the research project itself as well as your research qualifications. However, there were several minor points of criticism in the review, and the reviewers expressed greater support for other applications. For budget-related reasons, the FWF can currently only approve those applications which receive the most favourable reviews and ratings; this means that your application could not be approved. If you choose to resubmit your application, please place greater emphasis on the strengths of the project and take the reviewers' suggestions into account in order to improve your chances of approval.

Standardised reasons for rejection (II)

3	The reviews of your application were largely positive with regard to the research project itself and/or your research qualifications. However, there were a number of points of criticism in the review, meaning that your application cannot be approved in its current form. If you choose to resubmit your application, please focus on the strengths of the project and take the reviewers' comments and suggestions into account visibly and in a transparent manner.
4	The reviews of your application were only partly positive with regard to the research project itself and/or your research qualifications. However, there were numerous points of criticism in the review, meaning that the project would have to be revised substantially and possibly re-oriented in order to be eligible for funding. If you choose to resubmit your application, please take the reviewers' comments and suggestions into account visibly and in a transparent manner.
5	The reviews of your application were predominantly very critical. As it cannot be assumed that the weaknesses in the application can be remedied within a short period of time, the FWF Board has decided that a resubmission to this funding programme will only be permitted after a period of 12 months.

Development of Human Resources

International mobility: **Erwin-Schrödinger-Programm**



Erwin Schrödinger Programme – Objectives

- **Target group**
 - Young, highly qualified postdocs of all disciplines
- **Objective**
 - To enable scientists/researchers to work at leading research facilities abroad and to acquire international experience in the postdoc phase
 - To explore new scientific/scholarly approaches for Austrian science and research

Erwin Schrödinger Programme – Basic information (I)

- **Submission of applications**
 - on a rolling basis
- **Approval rate**
 - Approximately 40% (highest approval rate at FWF)
- **Grant amount**
 - €34,100 – 46,400 / year (tax-exempt); travel costs (up to €1,500 depending on destination); lump sum for children accompanying researcher (up to €4,200 / year); conference attendance (up to €2,000 / year); pension insurance contributions
- **Return phase**
 - in Austria with senior postdoc salary plus €12,000 / year in project-specific costs; of those costs, up to EUR 2,000.00/year for coaching or personal development
- **Duration**
 - 10 to 24 months (abroad) + 6 to 12 months (return phase)

Erwin Schrödinger Programme – Basic information (II)

- **Prerequisites**
 - Completion of doctorate
 - Fulfilment of the territoriality principle
 - International publications
 - Invitation of a foreign research institution
- **Programme-specific requirements**
 - Reasons for selecting the research institution abroad
 - Information on career development and the Know-How-transfer to Austria
 - Recommendation letter of the Austrian research institution considering the possibility of return and/or the requested return phase
 - Declaration from host institution and declaration regarding ethics (with questionnaire)

Questions to reviewers - Schrödinger

Section 1 (to be transmitted to the applicant in its entirety):

- 1 Level of originality or scientific/scholarly innovation of the application
- 2 Scientific/scholarly quality of the proposal
- 3 Approach/methods and feasibility of the proposal
- 4 Academic qualification of the applicant (based on her/his academic age)
- 5 Suitability of the chosen host and the hosting foreign research institution
- 6 Importance of the fellowship for the career development of the applicant and the contribution of the acquired know-how to the Austrian research sector (achieving the aims of the funding programme)

☐ excellent ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ average ☐ poor

- 7 Ethical aspects / Sex-specific and gender-related aspects

Section 1b (optional remarks to the applicant)

Reviewer's recommendations to the applicants for implementing the project (in the case of approval). The recommendations made here generally should not play a role in the funding decision.

Section 2 (confidential remarks to the FWF)

Other comments intended solely for the FWF

Development of Human Resources

International mobility: **Lise Meitner Programm (Incoming)**



Lise Meitner Programme – Objectives

▪ Target group

- Highly qualified scientists of all disciplines from abroad

Incoming: Postdocs from abroad

Reintegration: post-doctoral researchers who have left Austria and wish to return to an Austrian research institution

▪ Objective

- Cooperation with Austrian research institutions to strengthen the quality and the scientific know-how of the Austrian research community
- Introduction of new scientific fields into Austria
- Promotion of international cooperation
- Career development

Lise Meitner Programme – Basic information (I)

- **Submission of applications**
 - on a rolling basis
- **Approval rate**
 - Approximately 25%
- **Grant amount**
 - Postdoc or Senior postdoc salary, removal allowance, lump sum for children accompanying researcher, travel costs, project-specific costs up to €12,000 / year; of those costs, up to EUR 2,000.00/year for coaching or personal development
- **Duration**
 - 24 months
- **Prerequisites**
 - Completion of doctorate
 - International publications
 - Invitation of an Austrian research institution

Lise Meitner Programme – Basic information (II)

■ Prerequisites

- **Incoming:** post-doctoral researchers from abroad who do **not** meet either of the criteria related to residence in Austria (these criteria are fulfilled if: a) the applicant's main place of residence has been in Austria for at least three of the previous ten years at the time of application, and/or b) the applicant has been continuously working in research in Austria for at least two consecutive years prior to submitting the application);
- **Reintegration:** post-doctoral researchers whose main place of residence has been outside of Austria for at least four years at the time of application (regardless of whether they fulfil one of the residence-related criteria) and who seek to re-establish themselves at an Austrian research institution through the Lise Meitner Programme.

Lise Meitner Programme – Basic information (III)

■ Programme-specific requirements

- Co-applicant at the Austrian research institution (= host), whose suitability and qualification is also evaluated
- Justification of the co-applicant for selecting the applicant (“What kind of additional or new input can be expected by the collaboration?”)
- Career plan of the applicant

■ Criteria for project descriptions

- Justification of the selection of the Austrian research institution and the expected scientific added value of this collaboration
- Importance of the project for the academic and research reputation of the applicant and his or her career development.

Questions to reviewers - Meitner

Section 1 (to be transmitted to the applicant in its entirety):

- 1 Level of originality or scientific/scholarly innovation of the application
- 2 Scientific/scholarly quality of the proposal
- 3 Approach/methods and feasibility of the proposal
- 4 Academic qualification of the applicant (based on her/his academic age)
- 5 Academic qualification and suitability of the co-applicant as a mentor as well as the quality (international research reputation) of the research environment
- 6 Importance of the project for the career development of the applicant, and the expected added value generated for the Austrian research institution by the collaboration of the applicant and co-applicant (brain gain)

☐ excellent ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ average ☐ poor

- 7 Ethical aspects / Sex-specific and gender-related aspects

Section 1b (optional remarks to the applicant)

Reviewer's recommendations to the applicants for implementing the project (in the case of approval). The recommendations made here generally should not play a role in the funding decision.

Section 2 (confidential remarks to the FWF)

Other comments intended solely for the FWF

Application guidelines, including tips

Application basics

- Choice of topic: Bottom-up (i.e. determined by applicants)
- Type of research: Scholarly research designed to generate new knowledge
- Eligibility: Based on residence (Austria); scientific qualification (publications)
- Quotas: None
- Processing time: Ø 4.6 months (in programmes with no application deadlines)

Project description

- Research-related criteria
- Human resources
- Financial aspects of project

Application guideline: Stand-alone projects

1. Scientific/scholarly aspects

- Clearly defined aims and hypotheses or research question(s) of the project
- Description of the project's anticipated level of originality or scientific/scholarly innovation
- Relevance to international research in the field (international state of research)
- Methods
- Intended cooperation arrangements (national and/or international)
- Work plan and timeline
- All potential ethical, safety-related, or regulatory aspects
- All potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects

Application guidelines: Stand-alone projects

2. Human resources

- Research-related qualifications of the researchers involved

3. Financial aspects (use template structure)

- Information on the research institution and those of the national research partners
 - Available personnel (not financed by the FWF)
 - Available infrastructure
- Information on the funding requested
 - Concise justifications for the personnel requested
 - Concise justifications for non-personnel cost

Formal application requirements* (I)

- Free-form application ⇒ Project description, and annexes
 - 1) justification of costs
 - 2) list of references
 - 3) CVs & publications
 - 4) if applicable: collaboration letters
- Project description ⇒ no more than 50,000 characters, 20 pages (see format requirements) including table of contents, figures and tables
- Annex 1: Information on research institution(s) and justification of requested funding
- Annex 2: List of references: ⇒ no more than 5 pages
- Annex 3: Academic CV, 10 most important publications in entire career, description of previous research achievements (no more than three pages per person); for PI and maximum 3 more researchers
- Annex 4: Confirmations of all national and international cooperation partners (cooperation letters, no more than 1 page)
- Forms ⇒ Affirmation of research institution

**: for a complete description see application guidelines*

Formal application requirements (II)

- Attachments to be uploaded separately:
- Publication list of all the key project participants for the last 5 years, broken down into peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed (mandatory, for FWF internal use only)
- If applicable: accompanying letter to the application
- List of reviewers to be excluded
- Report on results or final report, for follow-up applications
- For resubmissions:
 - overview of all changes made in the resubmitted application
 - response(s) to reviews
- vendor quotes for equipment, etc.

Key aspects of applications

Enthusiasm among reviewers

- Presentation of state of the art in international research, positioning of project in relation to state of the art
- Clearly defined, focused research questions/hypotheses
- Presentation of preliminary research
- Description of scientific innovation or novelty
- Concise and clear description of methods and work plan
- Completeness and substance of descriptions and required expertise
- Transparent justification of costs
- Comprehensible English

Shortcomings in the areas listed above are the most common sources of reviewer criticism.

FWF procedures: Key points

- Strict bottom-up principle: No thematic requirements, no quotas, no preferential treatment
- Multiple checks in all steps of procedure and decisions
- Close interaction with applicant to maximise transparency
- Independent, international peer review as the basis for quality assurance
- Text of reviews as most important basis for decisions (ratings treated as mere indicators)
- Discussion of and decisions on all projects from all disciplines during an FWF Board meeting with representatives from all disciplines

Principles of the review process

Quality benchmark	→	International research community
Peer review	→	All reviewers based outside Austria
FWF reporters	→	nomination of expert reviewers
FWF Executive Board	→	Appointment of reviewers
Number of reviews	→	2
Meetings	→	5 per year
Decisions	→	Issued by FWF Board on basis of reviews
Reasoning	→	Reviews
Ex-post reviews	→	Peer review of final reports

Basic principles of reviewer selection

- Reviewers must be experts based outside of Austria and still active in the field; they must be at least at the same level as the applicant.
- Reviewers are always chosen specifically for each application, no fixed reviewer selections (no more than two reviews per year; 90% have never written a review for the FWF)
- Regional distribution of reviewers
- Objective: steady increase in share of women among reviewers
- In smaller disciplines, "generalists" may also be called upon for reviews.
- "Negative list": possible exclusion of up to three reviewers
- Abstract is sent first in order to ensure suitability
- Examination of potential biases by FWF Office
- Reviewers required to submit declaration regarding bias



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