Call for proposals within the framework of the Berlin University Alliance

Career Development Awards

Type of call for proposals: Award (Individual funding)  
Application deadline: July 8, 2021

Start of funding: October 1, 2021  
Duration of funding: Six months

Eligible applicants: Postdocs of the partner institutions  
Funding volume: 10

In founding the Berlin University Alliance, Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin have set the ambitious aim of jointly turning Berlin into an integrated research and career environment. Together the partners explore major societal challenges, increase public outreach, promote the training of junior researchers, address issues of quality and standards in research, and share resources in the areas of research infrastructure, teaching, diversity, equal opportunities, and internationalisation.

Funding format

The “Career Development Awards” of the Berlin University Alliance fund outstanding Postdocs from the four partner institutions who wish to devote six months to a focused research project that serves to further develop and hone their research and career profile. Successful applicants will be granted a leave of absence for one semester with continued salary. Teaching responsibilities and other institutional duties are suspended during this time. The respective institution will receive adequate compensation.

Research projects that promote collaboration and mobility among the partner institutions are particularly welcome. Stays at external universities or research institutions in Germany and abroad are also possible. Additional materials funding, including for childcare expenses, may be applied for (see “Eligible Costs” section).

Funding goals

The award is intended to give Postdocs time to work intensively on a research project that can significantly advance their research career. The overarching goals of the funding line are to:

• Further develop and hone the career profile of outstanding Postdocs in the direction of top-level research
• Increase the competitiveness of Postdocs
• Contribute to individual network formation and expansion
• Increase the mobility of Postdocs within the Berlin University Alliance
• Strengthen the international profile of Postdocs (in the case of stays abroad)

The research projects are carried out based on the individual application outlines and goals. Examples of possible projects include:

• Development/editing of a research idea with a view to publication or an application for third-party funds
• Initiation/execution of a collaborative research project with researchers at institutions of the Berlin University Alliance (deepening of cross-institutional networking and collaboration)
• Initiation/execution of a collaborative research project with external universities or research institutions in Germany and abroad by means of a research stay

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Funded within the framework of the Excellence Strategy of the German federal and state governments
• Formulation/development of a new research topic/method for a research project

This list is not exhaustive. All projects that are eligible to achieve the funding goals are welcome.

Target group
The funding line is aimed at Postdocs who are employed at one of the partner institutions of the Berlin University Alliance and are financed entirely from the institution's budget. The candidates must be employed at the time of application and employment must continue at least through the end of the 2021/22 winter semester.

The funding is aimed exclusively at individuals. Applications from Postdocs of all disciplines are welcome. To ensure equality and diversity, applications from qualified women as well as individuals with other diversity characteristics (e.g., disabilities, first generation, migration experience, etc.) are especially welcome.

Duration of funding
The research semester is approved for a full six months. It is not possible to shorten or extend the funding period.

Eligible costs
The Postdocs selected will be granted leave of absence for six months with continued payment of their salaries to implement the approved project. The Berlin University Alliance provides the institute at which the Postdocs are employed with personnel funds to finance the replacement position (analogous to TV-L 13 level 6, duration: up to six months).

In addition, applicants may apply for material costs. Please note that material costs are approved and reimbursed in accordance with the regulations of the respective institution. Applicants may apply for the following costs:

• Travel and accommodation expenses of the award winners (in Germany and abroad) up to an amount of 10,000 euros
• Costs of materials, consumables, software, fees for the use of foreign research facilities, if applicable, up to an amount of 3,000 euros.
• Childcare expenses up to an amount of 10,000 euros. The application for childcare expenses is subject to the following conditions:
  • One or several stays at external institutions in Germany and/or abroad is/are planned that are located outside of Berlin or the applicant's own place of residence.
  • One child/children under 12 as travel companion/companions.
  • An estimate of the cost of a childcare facility will be included with the application.

The material costs applied for must be fully justified, reasonable, and directly related to the project applied for.

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1 The reimbursement of material costs is currently under review at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. Details will be published in due time.

2 In cases in which childcare or other material expenses are reimbursed, the beneficiary may be subject to taxation resulting from a “monetary benefit”. The partner institutions are currently in the process of reviewing the legal situation.

3 See above (monetary benefit).
Within two months after completion of the funding, the award winners will submit a report to the Berlin University Alliance describing the achievement of the objectives (approx. two pages).

Application
Applicants are requested to send the following documents sorted and in a pdf document by e-mail to promoting-talent@berlin-university-alliance.de. The submission deadline is July 8, 2021. The documents can be submitted in German or English.

- Application form (template)
  - Information on the applicant: name, contact details, gender, field of study, etc.
    - If applicable: details of non-academic circumstances that have affected/slowed down the academic work. These include pregnancy and childbirth, childcare, care for dependents in need of care, disability or chronic illness, long serious illness, military, or civilian service. The information is voluntary.
    - If applicable: information on other diversity characteristics (e.g., disabilities, first generation, migration experience, etc.) The information is voluntary.
- Employer's notification form (template) including the following information:
  - Employment information (e.g., job tenure, scope/funding of position)
  - Acknowledgement by the dean and the head of the institute and confirmation of the agreement with the institute regarding the organization of the substitute; naming of the training course hours to be substituted.
- CV (template), max. three pages excl. publications
- Project title and abstract (template), max. 400 words
- Outline of the project (template), max. four pages, which should include the following information:
  - Title and description of the project
  - Formulation of goals and, if applicable, indicators of goal achievement
  - If applicable, description of planned collaboration with other institutions (for example within the Berlin University Alliance) and expected added value
  - Place(s) where the project is to be carried out; in the case of a research stay and, additionally, letter of invitation from the institution in Germany or abroad (this can be submitted later if necessary)
  - Placement of the project in own research agenda and explanation of benefit for individual career planning (for example, profile formation or honing, new method skills, network formation)
  - Schedule/work plan
  - Justification of the material resources (if applied for).
- Financing plan (template): material resources required.

The submission of incomplete documents will lead to the exclusion of the application from the further procedure.

Assessment criteria and selection process
The appropriateness of the material resources applied for is a basic requirement to be fundable.

Assessment criteria
- Qualifications and past performance record of the applicant
• Quality of the project in relation to the career development of the applicant, e.g., increase of (international) competitiveness
• Preferably: expected benefits of the funding for the applicant in terms of forming networks within the Berlin University Alliance or with its strategic partners
• Feasibility of the project

Review and selection process

The process is organized as follows:

1. Receipt of applications
2. Formal review
3. Review of each application by two reviewers based on a defined review schedule. Non-academic circumstances (see above, application documents) will be included in the review. Diversity characteristics indicated voluntarily in the application may also positively influence the assessment.
4. Funding decision
5. Notification of the funding decisions to the successful candidates via their respective institutes

Deadlines

Start of the call for proposals: June 3, 2021
Application deadline: July 8, 2021
Funding decision: August/September 2021

Contact

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