Berlin University Alliance

Alliance Center Electron Microscopy

Call for proposals: Seed funding for early career researchers

Start date for submission of proposals: March 1st, 2024

Deadline for submission of proposals: January 2nd, 2026

End of funding period: September 30, 2026

What is funded?

The *Alliance Center Electron Microscopy* (ACEM) of the Berlin University Alliance (BUA) provides financial support for the use of ACEM facilities. The target group are early career researchers who require service provided by EM facilities of the ACEM for their scientific projects, but do not (yet) have the financial means to pay EM user fees. This program aims to strengthen the potential of promising applicants to successfully acquire independent third-party funding (e.g. DFG proposals) based on EM data.

Amount of funding

Funding of up to 10,000 EUR for the use of ACEM facility services for a period of up to 12 months. Before applying, it is necessary to consult with the ACEM facility where the EM analyses need to be carried out. The participating EM facilities are listed in the appendix.

A total of 90,000 EUR/year is available within the funding line “seed funding for early career researchers” and we expect to fund 9 to 12 early career scientists per year.

Successful applicants are expected to submit a short written report within 6 months after the end of the funding period. This should include information on submission of a grant application to a third-party funding agency.

Who can apply?

Early career researchers (e.g., post-doctoral researchers, PhD-students finishing a paper for a later post-doctoral position, and assistant professors in their first year) working at one of the BUA partners (Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin) who are not holding a permanent position yet.

Evaluation criteria

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the ACEM committee based on scientific quality, such as: quality of the project design (including appropriateness of selected methods and handling of research-ethical aspects), adequacy of data collection and access as well as potential for obtaining third-party funding. Funding decisions will be communicated in a transparent manner.

Members of the ACEM shall disclose any conflict of interests or bias related to a research project under review or the individual without any delay, at the latest at the beginning of the selection process. Bias criteria are based on DFG regulations (DFG form 10.201 - 4/10 in the current version: EN, DE) and include the exclusion of members from the selection process if, among other things,

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there are current or planned close collaborations or official dependencies and supervisory relationships.

Application

Applications can be submitted any time, latest in 02.01.2026 and should include:

- Curriculum vitae
- A letter of support from the supervisor or the institute council is expected, stating that the applicant will be supported by the institution for the duration of the project.
- Project description (max. 1 page) with focus on EM analysis
- Short statement on the planned externally funded project (e.g., DFG proposals) and its research objective: What will happen with the obtained data after seed funding has ended? What other funding resources will be considered/included?
- Expected costs according to the terms of use of the EM facility (based on a quote from the EM facility of the ACEM at which the analyses are planned)
- Desired project start date

Further information

The call is open until 02.01.2026

Applications for seed funding can be submitted by email to the coordinator for the Alliance Center (Objective 5; see below) throughout the year and without a fixed deadline. The application is submitted without a standardized template.

The coordinator for the Alliance Center will be responsible for the formal review. The application will be reviewed by the ACEM committee, in particular with regard to its potential for attracting external funding and the adequacy of the funding requested.

Funding can only be provided if sufficient funds are still available.

The coordinator for the Alliance Center will inform the applicant in writing about the evaluation outcome. The expected period for the decision-making process will be 4 to 8 weeks.

Submission

Please submit your application by email and all documents in one pdf-file to the coordinator of the ACEM:

Dr. Alexandra Vetter
Berlin University Alliance
Objective 5 "Sharing Resources"
Kleine Präsidentenstraße 1
10178 Berlin
alexandra.vetter@berlin-university-alliance.de

Initial scientific consultation

For an **initial consultation** on electron microscopy measurements in the **life sciences**, please contact: Prof. Matthias Ochs (Charité): matthias.ochs@charite.de

For an **initial consultation** on electron microscopy measurements in the **materials science or natural sciences**, please contact: Dr. Dirk Berger (TU Berlin): dirk.berger@tu-berlin.de

Appendix

List of ACEM members:

Freie Universität Berlin

Life Science:

- Research centre for electron microscopy (FZEM) (Structural Biology)
- Institute of Veterinary Anatomy: Zentrum für Elektronenmikroskopie (Cellular EM)

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin:

Natural Science:

- Structure Research and Electron Microscopy group

Life Science:

- Institute of Biology - Molecular Parasitology: Comparative electron microscopy (Cellular EM)

Technische Universität Berlin

Natural Science and Material Science

- Center for Electron Microscopy (ZELMI) (Topography, elemental composition and crystal structure analysis with Visible Light- and Electronmicroscopy incl. sample preparation)
- Institute of Optics and Atomic Physics - Electron- and Ion-Nanooptics (Advanced S/TEM-Methods)

Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin

Life Science:

- Core Facility for cryo Electron Microscopy (Structural Biology)
- Core Facility Electron Microscopy (Ultrastructure Research)

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