



Call No. 3 of the research funds for the German Sport University Cologne

Call for proposals for initial funding (JUNIOR-PROFESSORS, POSTDOCS and DOCTORAL STUDENTS in the final phase)

Aim of the grant

In view of the increasing need for universities to acquire third-party funding, especially within the framework of competitive procedures, the German Sport University Cologne supports researchers in the qualification phase with funding line 3 (start-up funding) to deal with the associated requirements and expectations and to prepare a third-party funding application.

The application for competitive funding is intended to **increase the third-party funding** competence of the researchers. Funding through funding line 3 should make it possible to prepare a third-party funding application. The aim of funding line 3 is to submit this third-party funding application with a funding amount of at least 50,000 euros per year in competitive funding programs, especially from the DFG and EU, the BMFTR and BiSP or Foundations. In line with the current efforts of the DSHS, applications for third-party funding should be prepared in funding line 3, e.g. for a first application (DFG) or a Starting Grant (ERC).

When selecting the funding organization, the suitability of the research project for the call or the programme must be determined in advance and explained in the application (e.g. the criterion of basic research in the case of a planned DFG application or the application-oriented significance for EU, BMFTR, BMG and BiSP).

Particularly welcome are projects that provide for DSHS-internal collaborations in addition to national and/or international collaborations in corresponding funding programs. Cooperation with the Medical Faculty of the University of Cologne is possible with immediate effect within the framework of joint special funding (see [information sheet](#)).

If the project requires equipment or instruments that are already available at the GSU in other institutes, a compensation payment may be made if these are made available for the HIFF project to offset any additional costs and resource commitments resulting from wear and tear, training in their use, repair costs, etc. The compensatory payment, up to a maximum of 2,000 euros, is paid to the lending institute or department in accordance with the [established regulations](#)

Possible funding programs that can be selected for application via FL3 include:

- **DFG Individual Research Grants** (<https://www.dfg.de/en/research-funding/funding-opportunities/programmes/individual/research-grants>)
- **ERC Starting grant** (<https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/starting-grant>)
- **BiSP- Applied research projects** (https://www.bisp.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/Formularcenter/Checkliste_Antragstellung_Anttragsforschung.html?nn=364880)
- **VIP+** (<https://www.validierungsfoerderung.de/>)
- **Go-Bio Initial** (https://www.go-bio.de/gobio/en/go-bio/go-bio_node.html)
- **Exist Forschungs Transfer** (<https://exist.de/programm/exist-forschungstransfer/>)

In case of approval by the funding body, the research project must be carried out at the German Sport University Cologne.

Funding modalities

Up to € 40,000 or a maximum of one WMA position with a scope of 50% (TV-L 13) for 12 months can be applied for; the project duration can extend over a period of up to 18 months. The funds can be used for personnel, material and travel¹ expenses (no congress fees). The personnel funds can also be used for an own position or to increase the own position. In addition, funds can be applied for as part of the [Internationalization](#) (3,000 euros) and [Open Access](#) (2,000 euros) modules. Internal interdisciplinary collaboration with researchers from other GSU institutes (not departments) is possible as part of a joint grant application (increase in amount of funding by 1,500 euros).

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Approval is subject to the provision that the university budget permits implementation and that sufficient funds are available to the university in the year of approval.

Application process

Junior professors, Postdocs and doctoral candidates in the final phase of their dissertation are eligible to apply. For applicants in the final phase of their doctorate, the following additional requirements apply: The application for the opening of the doctoral procedure (i.e. submission of the dissertation) must also have been submitted no later than **6 months after submission** of the application for internal university research funding. The project period can only begin and any position applied for can only be taken up once the application to open the doctoral procedure has been

¹ Please note that call no. 3 is not a travel grant. Therefore, applications that only provide for the financing of conference costs and the associated travel expenses cannot be accepted. Up to €1,500 can be applied for to cover conference costs (including the associated travel expenses).

submitted. Only one application can be submitted per person. The application must be supported by the head of the institute or department (see template). **Parallel submission in FL 2 or 4 is not possible.** Persons who are leading another project within the framework of internal university research funding that has not yet been completed at the time of approval are excluded from submitting an application.

The application must emphasize the extent to which the planned third-party funded project is important for the own academic career and independence. If the timetable takes into account review periods by the intended funding body, work should be carried out during this period that accompanies or supports the project.

The application form for call no. 3 must be used for the application submission.

Proposals can be written in German or English.

Information on the use of **artificial intelligence** in the form of generative models for text and image creation in the application:

The use of generative models is permitted, but must be disclosed and cited in a scientifically appropriate manner. The use must be in line with good scientific practice and applicants should disclose whether and to what extent they have used generative models for their research and in the context of the application. The responsibility for maintaining scientific integrity remains with the researchers themselves. In addition, legal aspects, such as copyright, must be taken into account when using generative AI in the context of an application. Generative AI should be seen as an aid and not as a substitute for the researcher's own scientific expertise. The final responsibility for the content and quality of the application lies with the applicant.

Please note: If the formal requirements of the application form (page numbers, missing signatures, missing documents, budget overruns etc.) are not met, the application will not be accepted.

Complete application documents should be handed in electronically (via e-mail, max. 8 MB) as one pdf document to the Department of Research and Scientific Qualification (forschung-dshs@dshs-koeln.de). Please state in the email subject line the call number (Call 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) for which you apply (e.g. Call 3 for this funding line).

For questions, please contact Dr. Birte Ahrens (b.ahrens@dshs-koeln.de, - 8737).

Review process and approval

All applications are reviewed as part of a review process. The University Commission for Research and Transfer makes the final decision on funding on the basis of the written reviews and the funding priorities of the call. The following criteria are taken into account in the review process:

- Relevance of the topic
- Quality and feasibility of the work programme

- Fit of the research topic to the targeted funding program/the selected funding organization
- Consideration of gender and diversity dimensions in the application
- Realistic time schedule
- Individual-related aspects (e.g. previous research achievements).

Approvals are estimated to be given by December 2026.

Required output

- Up to the end of the project period, an **application for third-party funding must be submitted** to a funding organization within the framework of a competitive procedure.
- In the course of the proof of submission, you will receive a link to a questionnaire on the general conditions of funding and project implementation. Participation in this survey (approx. 10 minutes) is mandatory.

Obligations

If the funds are used in the sense of an own position or an increase, the position includes a teaching obligation of 2 SWS (for a 50% WMA position). The applicant is expected to seek advice from the Department of Research and Scientific Qualification regarding the application to be submitted, and to submit the application to the Department of Research and Scientific Qualification after submission to the selected funding agency. In case of approval by the funding agency, the application should be made available to other young researchers as a "best practice" via the Department of Research and Scientific Qualification. Rejected applications and, if possible, expert opinions should also be submitted to the department.

Deadline is September 9th, 2026.