Summer Schools

Applications for summer schools can be submitted anytime (at least eight months prior to the date of the actual event).

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I. Objectives

Within the framework of “Symposia and Summer Schools”, the Foundation supports events which provide the opportunity to develop new ideas and cutting-edge research perspectives and to promote the discussion of topics and approaches which have not yet been addressed. Generally, these meetings have to have an interdisciplinary and international orientation. The summer schools aim primarily at introducing early-career researchers (doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers) to new research topics. The Foundation thereby expects a significant representation of women both as speakers and participants. The Foundation particularly wants to encourage the development and testing of new event formats and instruments to promote the interaction among the participants.

II. Funding Opportunities

Support is available for events concerning any topic and is not restricted to a particular discipline. It is therefore not necessary to address a topic related to a current funding initiative from the Foundation’s funding portfolio. Funding is available for summer schools that aim to equip selected young academics (particularly doctoral candidates but also post-doctoral researchers) with new insights and knowledge important for the further development of a particular research area. A series of summer schools comprising up to three consecutive measures which build on each other may also be eligible for support.

Generally, summer schools can take place throughout Germany and only in exceptional cases abroad. These include, for example, international summer schools which have to take place in another country due to the specific teaching framework or topic (e.g. fieldwork). A basic requirement for such funding is the cooperation between a German institution as the main applicant and a local research institution. The cooperation must be documented in the concept of the event at the time of application.

III. General Conditions

In order to ensure efficient working conditions, the number of participants should not exceed 60 persons, including the speakers; depending on the theme, a smaller number may sometimes be advisable. In line with the summer schools’ focus on young scientists, the participants should significantly outnumber the lecturers. It has to be ensured that all participants are proactively involved in the event. Speakers should be available beyond their lectures for exchange and discussion with the participants. A summer school can last anything between four days and two weeks.

The circle of participants should reflect the multidisciplinary character of the topic. In order to promote the active participation of all participants and a comprehensive exchange of opinions, programs should contain varied and especially interactive event formats. There is to be a substantial share of doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers from German research institutions. The general idea is not only to extend the participants’ knowledge, but also to enable them – at an early stage of their career – to develop and establish contacts beyond national borders and individual disciplines. Experts from other countries should also be invited to participate as speakers.
IV. Application and Selection Procedure

Applications for summer schools can be filed at any time. In the interest of a smooth review process, applications have to be submitted at least eight months prior to the event date.

Applications for summer schools are subject to written review.

The Foundation limits its financial support to the following items:

- Expenses for catering and accommodation; rental of premises.
- Travel expenses for participants and speakers.
- Funds for child care within the scope of the event.
- Funds for student/research assistants for preparing and running the event, including the costs for the compilation of working materials and their publication in the internet (or photocopying where required).
- Up to € 500 for non-personnel costs (e.g. for materials and event programs).

No funds can be provided for the following items:

- Partial financing of a summer school already funded elsewhere.
- Travel cost subsidies for individual visitors to a summer school.
- Costs of honoraria, assistants and similar items (in exceptional cases it is possible to apply for an allowance for lecturers who are not part of the scientific community, public administration or business representatives, e.g. self-employed persons).
- Any supplementary programs, costs of travel to the event or accommodation and catering for accompanying persons.
- Travel and accommodation costs for participants from industry.

The following types of events are excluded from funding:

- Summer schools dealing with topics which are part of either regular or special teaching programs at universities.
- Events where the work program does not clearly integrate the latest research results.
- Gatherings which mainly bring together members of partner institutions within the framework of university partnerships.
- Activities connected with third party funded graduate schools, clusters of excellence or other coordinated funding from other sides.
- Summer schools within an established summer school series, repeats or adapted versions of summer schools already previously held, further financing of a summer school series previously funded elsewhere.
- Summer schools which are partially financed by other funding organizations or events with a planned or pending application for funding elsewhere.
V. Application Checklist

Proposals should describe the event in such a way that adequate information is available for the scientific review. Applications from the natural sciences, life sciences and engineering must be submitted in English. In the humanities and social sciences, applications must only be submitted in English if the event language is not German, otherwise applicants are free to choose between German and English.

Applications have to be submitted via the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation. The following information and data (.pdf) are required:

- Details on the applicant, co-applicant(s) where applicable and grant recipient (institution).
- The summer school title and proposed date.
- Budget and justification.
- Short scientific curriculum vitae (max. 3 pages) of the applicants (incl. a publication list of max. 10 of the most important and relevant publications).
- German and English summary of the project (in each case max. 300 words) including the date the event is planned to take place.
- The proposal itself (detailed description and reasoning, max. 5 pages) with explanations on how the event is to be advertised and how the participants will be selected.
- A self-assessment with answers to the following three questions (max. one page): What is the innovative aspect of your summer school topic? How do the contents of the summer school differ from regular courses? Which new fields are opened up for the participants by attending the summer school? You can use the template under Further Information to create your self-assessment.
- List of speakers and participants, their home institutions and area of studies (please list lecturers and young researchers separately). The list of participants can be completed or replaced by details on the announcement of the event and the planned selection procedure for participants. Please include the following information:
  - last and first name,
  - academic degree/title,
  - gender,
  - name and address of institute,
  - academic field,
  - title of lecture or poster,
  - career status (established or early-career researcher; doctoral candidates, post-doctoral researchers and junior professors count as early-career researchers; students are not included in the target group and therefore cannot be funded). Please state whether attendance is confirmed or not. You can use the template under Further Information to create the complete list of participants. If required, the list of participants can be supplemented by the call for the event and the planned selection procedure for the participants. When applying for a summer school series, you should provide suggestions for speakers to attend the second and, if applicable, the third event.
  - (Tentative) Program of the event including details on the respective event formats.
If the event is organized by both German and foreign colleagues, the person in charge should be an academic from a German university or research institute. According to the statutes, the Foundation can only grant funding to universities and other scientific institutions.

The Foundation shall not be held liable for any commitments entered into before the grant letter has been received.
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Further Information

- Self-Assessment Sheet
- Template List of Participants
- Template Budget Justification
- Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips
- Application FAQs
- Information for Applicants from Abroad
- Website Symposia and Summer Schools