

Who can apply?

Postdocs up to six years after their doctorate who are employed by or hold a scholarship of Goethe University. A connection via a teaching position or a position at a cooperating research institute (e.g. a Max Planck Institute) is not sufficient.

I have a junior/qualifying professorship. Can I apply for funding?

Yes, provided you are not in a tenure-track process.

Can I apply if I have already submitted a first application for third-party funding but it was rejected?

Yes, you are welcome to!

How are the 6 years after the doctorate counted?

There should not be more than six years between the year of the doctoral certificate and the call deadline of the Focus program. You can apply if the certificate is dated within the 6th year before the Focus application deadline. Periods of child rearing (after the doctorate) are credited (up to 2 years per child).

For what kinds of expenses can I use the Focus funds?

The funds are to be used for the development of your externally funded project up to a maximum amount of 10,000 Euros. Possible expenses are student assistants, small equipment and consumables, travel expenses to conferences, organization of workshops, publication costs, etc. The funds **cannot** be used to finance your own position.

All expenditures must be comprehensibly justified and have a direct connection to the planned research project. (See also: [*Are there templates for the planned use of funds/schedule? How detailed must the financial calculation be? What should be presented?*](#))

Which third-party funding lines are suitable?

In principle, all funding lines that support your start into an independent science career are eligible. Please keep the following points in mind:

- The funding line should fit your career path and your current career status.
- The desired external funding should serve the development of an independent research profile. Projects that are strongly integrated into your current research group or merely continue preliminary work may therefore be rejected.
- The requested funding should make sense in the context of the funding line: Walter Benjamin positions, for example, usually do not require preliminary work, so obtaining Focus funds for WB proposals is only possible in exceptional cases.

I have not yet received my doctoral certificate. Can I still apply?

If you have successfully completed your disputation before the end of the call period and can have this confirmed, you are welcome to apply.

What should the project description look like?

The project proposal is supposed to be a description of the **research project for which you plan to submit a grant proposal to a third-party funding agency** at the end of the Focus period. It should be no more than 3 pages long and the description should be concise, specific, and understandable by non-experts in your field. It should contain the following information:

- Outline which third-party funding is to be applied for and why
Please name the funding institution and the exact funding line to which you intend to apply. The research idea should already be sufficiently concrete so that a promising application can be submitted at the end of the 12-month Focus funding period.
- Description of ongoing work, planned collaborations, and goals
- Description of how the Focus funding will contribute to the feasibility of the project and increase the chances of receiving funding

How and where should I submit the application?

Please submit the application with all required documents as an attachment via email to fokus@grade.uni-frankfurt.de. Please submit the application form as a single file in Excel format.

Are there templates for the proposed use of funds/timeline? How detailed does the financial calculation need to be? What should be presented?

There are no templates. You should outline for which items you intend to use the requested funds. It should be clear from the application text why you need them. **Please be sure to justify each item!** There should be a clear connection between the goals stated in the project description and the budgeted expenditures.

Especially when requesting funds for student or research assistants, please be sure to identify the work they are going to perform and clearly demonstrate its contribution to the success of the project.

If you are requesting staff funds, please use Goethe University's current hourly rates as a guideline and follow the standards set forth in the [Code of Good Work](#) (contract length, monthly hours, etc.).

The timeline should outline work and research plans during the Focus funding period. It should also state the date of the planned submission of the external funding proposal and the desired start of the project.

Are there templates for the institutional support letter? Who needs to sign it?

Please use the following template:

„I hereby confirm that [Dr.] will be employed by/receive a scholarship from the [Institute/Centre/Department of] during the period of Focus funding stated in the application [month/year – month/year]. She/he will be given access to a work space and the infrastructure necessary to prepare the third-party funding proposal.“

The letter should be signed by the dean or the head of the institute. The purpose of the letter is to confirm that you are a member of Goethe University and that your work environment supports your application. It is **not** intended to be a letter of recommendation.

My employment contract runs for less than the 12 months of the Focus Program. Can I still apply?

Yes, provided the funds will be expended within your contract period. The 12 months is an upper limit, not a fixed project duration.

How are my application papers processed and who decides?

- After your application has been received, we will send you an acknowledgement of receipt and if necessary draw your attention to any missing documents.
- The application will then be forwarded to the commission members for preparation of the selection meeting.
- The selection committee is interdisciplinary and consists of professors from Goethe University. It is chaired by the vice president responsible for early career researchers.

What criteria will be used to review my application?

- Scientific independence of the planned application for third-party funding
- Precise goals, feasibility and the project's chances of gaining external funding as planned
- Originality and novelty of the project
- Targeted use of the requested funds (project relevance, benefit)
- Quality of the preliminary work
- Previous research activities, publications and - if available – previously acquired third-party funding
- International experience / research in an international context

How long will it take before I am notified of the decision?

You will receive a letter within approximately two months after the application deadline informing you whether your application was successful and—if so—about the amount of funding you will be granted.

When will the funds be available to me if I receive funding?

The funds will be available to you approximately 2-3 months after the submission deadline.

What is the probability that I will be funded?

The funding rate in the Focus program is approximately 50% of the submitted applications.

Do I always receive the full amount of funding applied for?

No, this is a competitive process. The selection committee may make reductions if the funding applied for is not sufficiently justified or not deemed necessary.

When will the application workshop and coaching sessions take place?

Dates for the application workshops will be announced in a timely manner after the selection process is complete. Following the workshop, you may schedule an appointment for individual application coaching.

What is the application workshop all about?

At the application workshop, an experienced research officer will inform you about the most important funding opportunities and discuss what is important in an application.

Do I have to report when I submit the application for external funding?

Yes please! We are happy to hear from you regarding the status of your external funding application. We will also send you an evaluation questionnaire approximately 18 months after the start of the grant, asking you about the status of the application and your satisfaction with the Focus program.

What happens if I am unable to submit the application for third-party funding within 12 months of receiving funding from Fokus?

There may be justified delays. Contact us and we will clarify what needs to be done.

Further questions? Please contact:

Dr. Sybille Küster

Phone.: 069/798-49401

E-mail: fokus@grade.uni-frankfurt.de