



# RMU Initiative Funding for Research

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Darmstadt/ Frankfurt am Main/ Mainz 2026 ff.

## Funding line: Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

(Deadline: 15 March 2026)

### Objective

Establishment of cross-university networks between academics from the Rhine-Main Universities in the early career phase (post-doctorate, from phase R2 to R3) with the perspective of achieving a specific joint collaboration goal. This could be, for example, joint applications for third-party funding, joint publications or joint activities in scientific communication.

### Use of funds

The funding must be used for activities that establish or strengthen the network and must be justified accordingly.

Eligible expenses are expenses that are used for networking between the ECRs of the Rhine-Main Universities, for instance, for joint workshops, conferences, to establish exchange platforms, for lecture series or also for student assistants.

Personnel resources (apart from funds for student assistants) and material resources for the acquisition and operation of equipment are expressly not eligible for funding. For hospitality expenses, the guidelines of the respective university must be observed.

The funding volume per project totals between EUR 10,000 and EUR 30,000 max. for all participating locations. The funding period is limited to a maximum of two years.

### Modalities

- At least two of the three Rhine-Main Universities must be significantly involved, one of them in a leading role. Collaboration partners from institutions outside the Rhine-Main Universities cannot be funded directly.
- Funding is open to all subjects and disciplines.
- Innovative collaboration ideas with a credible perspective of achieving the defined collaboration goals within or immediately following the funding period are eligible for funding.
- Eligible applicants are academics who, at the time of application and throughout the entire project period, are employed by universities in

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the Strategic Alliance of Rhine-Main Universities, who are in the early career phase (from R2, i.e., from entry into the orientation phase after their doctorate) prior to academic establishment, for instance, within the framework of a lifetime professorship.

### **Funding criteria**

- Degree of innovation of the research subject of the planned collaboration
- Significance of the collaboration for the ECRs involved (especially for their academic careers)
- Motivation of the ECRs involved
- Plausibility of the planned collaboration goals and prospects for success
- Plausibility and transparency of the underlying time planning (for instance, concretely defined milestones)
- Added value of collaboration through and for the RMU

### **Procedure**

- Applications can be submitted online by **15 March 2026** to [koordination@rhein-main-unis.de](mailto:koordination@rhein-main-unis.de).
- Consultation with the staff of the RMU Cooperation Management and/or the research support institutions of the three universities to check the formal criteria or to identify further contact persons for expert advice is obligatory.
- The funding decision is the responsibility of the RMU Vice President responsible for research.

### **Structure of the application (German or English)**

Maximum length of 5 pages

### **Outline**

#### **General information**

- Subject and objective of the project
- All applicants, including a central contact person at each university and one person with overall responsibility
- Participating PIs, unless listed as applicants, including their institutional affiliation

#### **Description of the initiative**

- Generally comprehensible summary of the project (½ page max.)
- Program, guiding questions, if applicable, and methodology
- Collaboration goals: significance and innovation potential
- Evidence of existing expert reports, preliminary work, if applicable (in addition to publications, contributions to software, science communication, etc., are also taken into account)



- Description of the added value of collaboration in the RMU framework by and for the RMU

#### **Concrete activities**

- Planned activities during the funding period
- Milestone planning for the funding period
- Outlook for possible follow-up activities

#### **Planned measures**

- Description of the measures to be financed from funding
- Contribution of the measures to project implementation

#### **Finance plan**

- Tabular breakdown of requested funds by year, university and cost type

#### **Appendix (does not count towards the maximum length)**

- Tabular curricula vitae and publication lists of the researchers involved in the proposal

#### **Further Information:**

[www.rhein-main-universitaeten.de](http://www.rhein-main-universitaeten.de)