



Rhine-Main Universities successful in the Excellence Strategy

Funding serves to develop Frankfurt/Rhine-Main into a world-leading region of science

The Rhine-Main Universities (RMU) – the alliance of Goethe University Frankfurt, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and Technical University of Darmstadt – will receive funding in the high millions from 2027 as a University Excellence Consortium in the Excellence Strategy of the German federal and state governments. The alliance is now part of the 12 individual universities and three university alliances in Germany that have been awarded the title of University of Excellence. The RMU receive additional long-term funding from the federal government and from the states of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate for their ambitious strategy to develop Frankfurt/Rhine-Main into a world-leading academic hub.

The proposal with which the RMU successfully applied to become a University Excellence Consortium is titled “RMU-EXCITE – Excellent. Collaborative. Transformative”. For the period until 2033, it sets out strategic goals that are closely interlinked: to promote strong, synergetic disciplines at the three universities; to empower a new generation of RMU researchers, students and experts who provide essential contributions to the future of research and society; to shape sustainable transformation together. The aim is to establish the RMU alliance as a world-leading hub for cutting-edge research that develops pioneering solutions for complex scientific and societal challenges. As a University Excellence Consortium, the three RMU universities stand for a research culture that creates a close connection between science and society by understanding dialogue, participation and collaborative knowledge creation as an integral part of scientific excellence.

A large number of strategic projects will be implemented as part of RMU-EXCITE, including strategic appointments, the further development of joint infrastructures for cutting-edge research, innovative degree programs, as well as additional offers for early career researchers and individuals with management responsibilities within the RMU and beyond.

Professor Tanja Brühl, current RMU spokesperson and President of TU Darmstadt: “Today’s decision that the RMU will receive funding as a University Excellence Consortium is an outstanding success for our alliance. I am absolutely delighted about this decision and very proud of everything we achieved together as RMU. I would like to thank all colleagues and students of our three universities: It is them who support, shape and develop our alliance with their engagement and their ideas. As RMU, we are convinced that, together, we can achieve more. This is why we combine the individual strengths and the diversity of our universities – and, in doing so, open up new opportunities. With RMU-EXCITE, we want to position the

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Rhine-Main region of science even more strongly as an internationally visible and attractive location for research, teaching and innovation. I very much look forward to the ambitious next steps that lie ahead of us now. We will continue on this path together. And, of course, we extend our sincerest congratulations to all other universities and alliances who were successful with their proposals: Here's to a fruitful collaboration!"

Professor Georg Krausch, President of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz: "This success is the result of the huge commitment and the excellent collaboration of many people at our three universities. I would like to extend my special thanks to everyone who, with their expertise, their innovative ideas and their extraordinary dedication, contributed to the success of our proposal – in particular the ministries of science of the states of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate, where our universities are located. The decision in favor of the RMU is a brilliant recognition of our joint effort. At the same time, it gives us the momentum to further deepen our collaboration and to open up new perspectives for the fields of research, study and teaching and exchange together."

Professor Enrico Schleiff, President of Goethe University Frankfurt: "The funding as a University Excellence Consortium provides us with the opportunity to capitalize on our strengths even more effectively: the diversity and complementarity of our three universities. On our path to this proposal, we have deepened our collaboration in various respects over the past ten years, and now we can go full steam ahead, establish new academic connections, bring together new generations of students, scientists and professionals, and establish research fields together which will develop a special momentum thanks to the collaboration of our three universities. We also want to make scientific findings available in dialogue with society, business and politics to tackle the great challenges of our times. The fact that the Excellence Commission supports us with the approval of RMU-EXCITE is a wonderful recognition."

In their proposal as a University Excellence Consortium, the RMU, as a cross-border alliance, received strong support from their respective states, Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate:

"Today is a historic day for Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate: The Rhine-Main Universities have received the coveted excellence title as the first universities in Hesse and as the first cross-border alliance in the Excellence Strategy. Congratulations! This is a brilliant joint success of science and politics", said the Hessian science minister Timon Gremmels. "Over many months, people worked with great dedication, a lot of heart and soul and high professionalism. I would like to thank the universities' executive boards and everyone involved in academia and administration. With the funding amounting to millions and the reputation of the Excellence Strategy, Technical University of Darmstadt, Goethe University Frankfurt and Johannes



Gutenberg University Mainz will become a global hotspot for research and innovation. This is beneficial for the Rhine-Main area and for Hesse. In addition to a clearly convincing scientific presentation, the strong commitment from politics with an administrative agreement of the two states and identical supporting resolutions of the state parliaments of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate also contributed to this success. The hard work has paid off. We are proud of our cutting-edge research."

The science minister of Rhineland-Palatinate, Clemens Hoch, congratulated the universities and scientists involved: "This decision is excellent news for the Rhine-Main Universities and for the science hub Rhineland-Palatinate. It impressively confirms that excellent research is particularly strong where universities, research institutions and states pool their expertise as partners. The funding starting in 2027 provides the alliance with planning security and new creative power. This is beneficial to science, early career researchers and, ultimately, to our society and to business. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this success: for your dedication, your expertise, your tenacity and your team spirit. You have shown what is possible when scientific excellence and close collaboration come together."

The Excellence Commission, consisting of experts from all research fields as well as federal and state ministers responsible for science and research, today selected the RMU as well as three individual universities and one other alliance for funding.

Today's funding decision was based on the written proposals which among other things provided an overview of the overall strategy and were submitted in November 2025, as well as the on-site visits by international expert panels at the applying universities and alliances between April and June 2026. In addition to the institutions that have now been selected for the period from 2027 to 2033, there are nine individual universities and one alliance that were selected as University of Excellence or University Excellence Consortium in the first round of the competition in 2019 and received a positive evaluation in March 2026.

Background:

The Excellence Strategy

The Excellence Strategy aims to sustainably strengthen Germany as a hub for science and enhance its international competitiveness. It is jointly implemented by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Science and Humanities Council (Wissenschaftsrat) through two funding lines: the Cluster of Excellence funding line, which supports internationally competitive research fields at universities or university alliances, and the Universities of Excellence funding line, which aims to permanently strengthen universities either as individual institutions or as university consortia, enhancing their international leadership in research based on successful Clusters of Excellence. Individual universities must have at least two Clusters of Excellence, while consortia must have a minimum of three.



Success in the Excellence competition is significant for universities not only because of the financial support provided by federal and state funds. It also boosts national and international visibility, since the program is globally regarded as an elite funding initiative. Clusters of Excellence can address interdisciplinary research fields with a long-term perspective, advance research and infrastructure in collaboration with non-university partners and increase the university's appeal as a place for research and study.

Photos will be available for download from 5.30 p.m.:

<https://www.bildermedien.tu-darmstadt.de/fotoweb/albums/arErnOglBLhRbRIU/>

About the Rhine-Main Universities (RMU)

Goethe University Frankfurt, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and Technical University of Darmstadt make up the Rhine-Main-Universities (RMU). The universities have a combined total of more than 90,000 students and 1,500 professors and cooperate closely in research, studying and teaching, the promotion of talent and in science exchange with business and society. These renowned research universities are shaping the Frankfurt/Rhine-Main region as a globally visible academic hub.

Further information: www.rhein-main-universitaeten.de