

Invitation of Proposals for International Excellence Grants (IEG) Project of the University of Excellence

Funding Line: International Excellence Fellowships

Funding Period 2026

Goal

International collaboration is of high importance in particular in top-level research. Excellence lives on competition and on exchange among the best researchers worldwide. By establishing International Excellence Grants (IEG) with funds granted to the University of Excellence concept “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association I Living the Change,” Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) intends

- to strengthen its renewal capability and top-level research,
- to expand its network to strengthen international recruiting, and
- to support strategic cooperation with international top-level universities and research institutions.

Description

With International Excellence Fellowships, researchers working at KIT will be enabled to invite outstanding researchers from abroad – from early-stage researchers to senior scientists and research alumni – to execute a [research] project at KIT **for a period of two to four months**.

For the duration of their stay, the fellows will be given facilitated and privileged access to the scientific, administrative, and social infrastructure of KIT and enjoy comprehensive personal support. The International Affairs Business Unit (INTL) will coordinate this project that also covers support of the host institutions or researchers at KIT. A particular focus will lie on promoting community building and on networking with other guest researchers at KIT.

Persons Eligible to Make Nominations

Persons eligible to make nominations for the International Excellence Fellowships are university teachers according or appointed executive scientists of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). The nominating scientists have to guarantee that the infrastructure required for the execution of self-chosen research projects (e.g. access to library, consumables, rooms) is available. Approval in writing by the corresponding head of institute is deemed to have been given.

Direct applications will not be accepted.

Funding

The maximum amount of an International Excellence Fellowship depends on the scientific qualification and the personal and family status of the nominated researchers and will be calculated individually (see Annex 1).

Funding Period

Taking into account the period applied for by the nominating person, the International Excellence Fellowship will be granted for **at least 2 up to a maximum of 4 months**. In justified cases the research stay can be divided up into three blocks. The travel allowance will be paid only once.

Nomination Criteria

For an International Excellence Fellowship, scientists with above-average qualifications from all disciplines and all countries can be nominated, who

- a) have successfully completed their doctorate or a comparable academic degree (Ph.D., C.Sc. or equivalent);
- b) can prove to have a distinctive scientific profile by a corresponding list of scientific publications in internationally referenced journals and publishing media;
- c) have a visible potential for the future (e.g. by supporting strategic partnerships or creating synergies and generating new topics).

At the time of nomination, the center of life and work of the nominees must have been abroad, as a rule, for at least five years. Moreover, the nominees should not have entered any permanent employment relationship in Germany at the time of selection. Earlier and shorter stays in Germany (e.g. within the framework of guest professorships) usually will not be considered any obstacle to nomination. Scientists of German nationality, who have pursued scientific work abroad for at least five years, may also be nominated.

Nominations of qualified female researchers are expressly welcome.

Nomination Procedure

Nominations have to be submitted by nominating scientists of KIT to the International Affairs Business Unit (INTL) together with the following documents:

- Nomination form
- Statement and offer of a place of research by the nominating person
- Description of the joint research project (3 pages at the maximum)
- CV in tabular form (2 pages at the maximum)
- List of key publications (10 at the maximum)
- Copy of doctoral certificate or equivalent
- Recommendation letter by a major cooperation partner (other than KIT) or scientist of the own (home) institution of the nominated person

Selection Criteria

The duly received, complete applications will be submitted to the Council for Research and Young Scientists (CRYS). It will prioritize the nominations according to the following criteria:

- Scientific career and scientific achievements made so far (mobility, determination, breadth of expertise, scientific productivity)
- Originality and innovation potential of the research project proposed (relevance to the further development of the discipline, convincing choice of scientific methods, opportunities for scientific further development, clear focus and feasibility of the project within the funding period applied for, possibility of project execution at the host institute)
- Distinctive future potential of the candidates (scientific further development, career perspectives, e.g. appointment to a professorship)
- Potential to open up perspectives for the KIT by
 - funding strategic partnerships,
 - developing regional focuses,
 - creating of synergies and generating of new topics, and
 - acquiring of third-party funds or qualifying for an appointment to a professorship or a leader of a research group in future.

The priorities determined by CRYS will then be submitted to the Executive Board for decision. The ultimate funding decision will be made by the Executive Board on the basis of the recommendations made by CRYS.

Procedure and Dates 2026

	Nomination Deadline	Announcement of results	End of stay at the latest
Funding Round 17	February 18, 2026	End of March 2026	December 31, 2026

Kindly submit the nomination documents **in electronic form to** ieg@intl.kit.edu.

If you have any further questions, contact **Ms. Elena Pfeifer**, who coordinates the internal selection process, by phone +49 (0)721 608-45320 or email elena.pfeifer@kit.edu.

We look forward to receiving your nominations!

**Annex 1 of the Invitation of Proposals for International Excellence Grants (IEG),
Project of the University of Excellence
Funding Line: International Excellence Fellowships**

As a rule, International Excellence Fellowships will be paid tax-free. Tax exemption according to Art. 3, No. 44, Income Tax Act is subject to the following conditions:

- a) The grants do not exceed the amount needed for fulfilling the research task or for covering the subsistence and education needs and are awarded according to regulations adopted by the funding institution.
- b) The recipient is not obliged to render a certain scientific or artistic service or execute a certain employment activity in return to the grant.

The amount of the International Excellence Fellowship depends on the scientific qualification and the personal and family status of the nominated researchers and will be calculated individually based on the following rates.

All amounts given are understood to be **maximum amounts**. The monthly basic amounts of the candidates will be calculated by the responsible departments of KIT.

Parallel acceptance of another grant or scholarship from public funds is not permitted.

1. Monthly Basic Amount

Category	Amount (in Euros)
Above-average qualified postdocs, scientists	2,700.-
Experienced scientists with a distinctive research profile, who work as Assistant Professor or Head of a Junior Research Group at least	3,200.-

2. Non-recurrent travelling allowance to cover the costs for the return travel according to the travel lump sums granted to research fellows by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

The list of travel lump sums, ordered according to countries, is available for download.