

European Research Council (ERC)



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Established by the European Commission

What is the ERC?

The **ERC** or the **European Research Council** (<https://erc.europa.eu/> (<https://erc.europa.eu/>)) is an institution of the European Commission for **funding excellent basic research**. The funds provided for this purpose come from the European Union's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation "HORIZON EUROPE", which runs from 2021 to 2027.

An ERC grant is regarded **internationally as a very high distinction** for the scientist in question, but also for the participating institution, since its "ERC eligibility" is now regarded as a criterion of excellence in both national and international competition.

How does an ERC grant differ from other (European) forms of research funding?

An ERC grant is an **individual grant**, i.e. apart from a host institution, the researcher does not need any other partners for the project. In contrast to other European individual funding programmes, the researcher can apply together with the institution where he/she is already employed. **Mobility** of the researcher is **not required** in this funding line! The calls for **proposals are open** and the **sole selection criterion is the scientific excellence of the project idea and the researcher**. The project duration can be up to **five years**.

Do all interested parties apply for the same call?

No, because **depending on the research experience of the applicants**, three types of Individual Grants are distinguished; in addition, there is the Synergy Grant as the largest and "group format", as well as the Proof of Concept Grant:

Starting Grant (ERC-StG)

- ▶ Eligible to apply: Young researchers who have completed their doctorate more than 2 and up to 7 years ago*.
- ▶ Funding amount: €1.5 million (plus €1 million for "additional costs" such as large-scale equipment, if applicable)
- ▶ Obligation: 50% of the total working time of the project leader(s) must be devoted to the ERC project

Consolidator Grant (ERC-CoG)

- ▶ Eligible to apply: Researchers who have completed their doctorate more than 7 and up to 12 years ago*.
- ▶ Funding amount: €2 million (plus €1 million for "additional costs" such as large-scale equipment, if applicable)
- ▶ Obligation: 40% of the total working time of the project leader(s) must be devoted to the ERC project

Advanced Grant (ERC-AdG)

- ▶ Eligible to apply: Scientists with at least 10 years of research experience* and proven excellence (e.g. through publications)
- ▶ Funding amount: €2.5 million (plus €1 million for "additional costs" such as large-scale equipment, if applicable)

► **Obligation:** 30% of the total working time of the project leader(s) must be devoted to the ERC project.

In addition to these three basic funding lines, there is also the **ERC Synergy Grant** funding line. Small, interdisciplinary groups of 2-4 outstanding researchers can be formed, each of whom individually fulfils the profile of an ERC applicant, and who jointly apply for a research project. The funding is intended to enable completely new, scientifically transformative and thus also correspondingly risky cutting-edge research. The funding amount can be up to 10 million euros over a term of up to 6 years.

For StG, CoG, AdG or SyG project leaders, the **Proof of Concept Grant** (ERC-PoC) also offers the possibility of applying to the ERC for a follow-up project to bring the results and/or developments from the previous ERC grant towards application (innovation market product).

When and how often are these calls published?

As a rule, the above-mentioned funding lines are **announced annually**. Exceptions are the Synergy Grant (decided from year to year) and the Proof of Concept Grant, for the latter there are 2-3 cut-off deadlines per year.

The **open calls for proposals** can be found > here (<https://erc.europa.eu/>) .

The **deadlines** can be found > here (https://www.euhochschulnetz-sachsen-anhalt.de/eu_hsnetz_media/Horizont+Europe/Topic%C3%BCbersichten/ERC+_+Exzellenzf%C3%B6rderung+EUNetzJuli2022-p-2046.pdf) .

Who supports applicants?

The **EU Higher Education Network Saxony-Anhalt** offers advice and support both for the application phase and during the project period. This service is also aimed at researchers who are not yet employed at a university in Saxony-Anhalt, but who wish to submit an ERC grant application with one of the universities as host institution.

For questions about ERC research funding, please contact:

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*The cut-off date for calculating the time span since the doctorate is 01st January of the year in which the current call is running and which is named the call. For the **ERC-2022-StG**, **ERC-2022-CoG** and **ERC-2022-AdG** calls, the time period thus refers to **01.01.2022**.

Example: The Starting Grant addresses researchers who received their doctorate at least 2 and up to 7 years ago. That means researchers **who received their doctorate in the calendar years 2015-2019** can apply for the **ERC-2022-StG** call.

Exceptions apply to those researchers who hold the title of **Dr. med.** Deviations from the above-mentioned deadlines may also apply **in the case of child-rearing periods**. In any case, please contact the EU University Network for information on how to determine your individual experience level.

With the European Research Council (ERC), the EU has been funding basic and frontier research in Europe since 2007. The special features of the ERC funding include, in particular, scientific autonomy in the design of the funding lines, the thematic openness of the calls for proposals and the funding of individual researchers.

The > ERC's (<https://erc.europa.eu/>) mission is to encourage the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and support investigator-driven frontier research across all fields, on the basis of scientific excellence.

ERC grants are awarded through open competition to projects headed by starting and established researchers, irrespective of their origins, who are working or moving to work in Europe. The sole criterion for selection is scientific excellence. The aim here

to recognise the best ideas, and confer status and visibility on the best brains in Europe, while also attracting talent from abroad.

- ▶ **Starting Grants** Grants up to 1.5€ million for 5 years. For promising early-career researchers with 2 to 7 years experience after PhD
- ▶ **Consolidator Grants** Grants up to 2€ million for 5 years. For excellent researchers with 7 to 12 years experience after PhD
- ▶ **Advanced Grants** Grants up to 2.5€ million for 5 years. For established research leaders with a recognised track record of research achievements
- ▶ **Synergy Grants** Grants up to 10€ million for 6 years. To address ambitious research questions that can only be answered by the coordinated work of a small group of 2-4 principal Investigators
- ▶ **Proof of Concept** Lump Sum Grant of 150.000€. For existing ERC grant holders to bring their research ideas closer to market

› Work Programme 2021 (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021/wp_horizon-erc-2021_en.pdf)

› Work Programme 2022 (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2022/wp_horizon-erc-2022_en.pdf)

› Work Programme 2023 (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023/wp_horizon-erc-2023_en.pdf)

› EU Liaison Office of the German Research Organisations (<https://www.kowi.de/en/kowi/Horizon-Europe/Excellent-Science/erc/european-research-council-erc.aspx>) (KoWi)

› ERC official Webpage (<https://erc.europa.eu/>) (open calls are published in the grey box on right hand side)

Important documents are in the ›ERC-Document Library. (<https://erc.europa.eu/document-library>)

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