



Call for Proposals 2026

Exploration Funds are provided for the identification and elaboration of new fields of research and are primarily aimed at disciplines within the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Tübingen.

The focus should be on research questions that have the potential to significantly shape current or foreseeable social debates. Interdisciplinary collaborations with other disciplines and research areas of the University are expected.

The call for proposals for the *Exploration Funds* 2026 is **open to all topics**.

Requirements for funding:

- Innovative research project with the potential to be expanded into a third party-funded collaborative project (CRC, Research Unit; ERC Synergy Grant etc.).
- Own previous work has already been done
- Interdisciplinary research approach, at least within the Humanities and Social Sciences
- Proven expertise on the proposed topic must be located in Tübingen
- An institutional connection is expected
- The Applicant must have a contract with the university for the duration of the project. At least one person on the main applicant team must be employed on a permanent basis.¹

Scope of funding:

- Start-up funding for a project up to a maximum duration of 3 years, in the form of:
 - Personnel resources (1 postdoc position E13, 100%, teaching obligation 4 weekly hours per semester). An appointment is only possible on a fixed-term basis for qualification purposes (Qualifizierungsbefristung).
 - Consumables (e.g. student assistants, workshops, retreats, seminar series etc.)
- The actual amount of funding depends on the needs as presented and justified in the proposal
- Doctoral positions cannot be funded within the framework of the *Exploration Funds*.

For the preparation of an application for a DFG GRK, SFB, TRR, or Research Unit, it must be applied for start-up funding provided by the state (prerequisite: the University of Tübingen acts as the coordinating institution). During this period, funding through the Exploration Funds is suspended.

Proposal requirements and structure:

Please use the provided [template](#) for the application. The preferred language is English. The application must contain the following information:

- Cover sheet showing the following information: Details of the applicant, co-applicants, period applied for (earliest start approx. September 2026), total amount applied for, information on whether the application has been submitted earlier in the same or a similar form, and an abstract (max. 100 words)
- Description of the project (field of research and research questions as well as theoretical and methodological approach), if applicable divided into sub-projects or work packages (max. 8 pages)
- Bibliography (literature cited in the application)

¹ If the applicant is leaving the university, this member is obligated to take over the organizational and subject-related management of the project and to act as spokesperson of the planned third-party funding application.

- Schematic description of the project plan incl. steps towards submission of the funding proposal
- Detailed financial plan in tabular form with justification of the requested funds
- List of associated researchers
- Short CVs of the (co-)applicants with a list of publications. At least 5 publications relevant to the project should be highlighted.

The standard formatting (Arial, 11 pt., line spacing 1.15) must be adhered to, margins must not be changed.

The proposal should address, inter alia, the following aspects:

- Novelty, innovative approach as well as societal relevance and contemporary significance of the proposed project
- Interdisciplinarity of the project, thematic alignment with existing research areas and structurally embeddedness
- Internal, national, and international partnerships and networks (existing and planned) for project implementation as well as outreach aspects and the integration of non-academic partners
- Existing preliminary work, the project's potential for a specific collaborative research framework (e.g. CRC, RTG, ERC Synergy Grant, etc.), and the planned steps towards submitting a corresponding third-party funding proposal
- Applicant's qualifications and capacity to successfully implement the project and to develop it into an application for a collaborative third-party funded project (e.g. CRC, RTG, Synergy Grant, etc.)

In addition, please also consider the guidance provided in the template.

Review process:

First, the project proposals are checked for completeness and formal criteria by the Excellence Strategy team. All applications that meet the formal requirements will be reviewed by external experts/ peer researchers. Based on the proposals and reviews the Advisory Board for the Humanities will invite the main applicants of selected proposals to present these to the board and afterwards provides a funding recommendation; the final funding decision is made by the President's Office.

Deadlines:

Application deadline: March 15, 2026
Project start: approx. September 2026

Application:

Applications must be submitted via the [University's Online Application Tool](#).

The application must be submitted in one PDF-Document. The preferred language of applications is English. Incomplete applications cannot be approved for review.

Contact:

For further information, please contact Jan Middendorf (76456) from the Excellence Strategy Team or send an email to jan.middendorf@uni-tuebingen.de