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**Kick Off: New Application for the Excellence Strategy**

The long-distance race for the Federal and State Excellence Strategy has begun. Today, 3 April 2017, marks the submission deadline for the first “wave of applications” at the [German Research Foundation \(DFG\)](#) in Bonn. TU Dresden (TUD) has been one of eleven Universities of Excellence since 2012 and joins this race with eight draft proposals for the “Clusters of Excellence” funding line. Due to its status quo as a University of Excellence, its outstanding reputation as a university strong in research and its superb networking with extramural research and culture institutions within the [DRESDEN-concept](#) research alliance, the largest university in the Free State considers to have good prospects in this competition.

To kick off the new [application process for the Excellence Strategy](#), TUD hosted an information event featuring prominent guests this morning. Stanislaw Tillich, Prime Minister of Saxony, and Dr. Eva-Maria Stange, State Minister of Science and the Arts, were also present at the TUD banquet hall on Dülferstraße, sending a clear message of support for the TUD application on behalf of [Saxony](#).



TU Dresden’s rector (centre) hands over the draft proposals for the Clusters of Excellence to the Prime Minister and the Science Minister.

### **Prime Minister Stanislaw Tillich: Free State Benefits from Excellence**

“Technische Universität Dresden, as an internationally renowned university and a ‘University of Excellence’ has time and again displayed its strength and has provided significant, new stimuli for research and teaching. It makes a decisive contribution to Germany and to Saxony as a successful and innovative hub for science and the economy. The entire Free State benefits from the status of ‘University of Excellence’, as leading scientists and students from all over the world are attracted by the recognised, outstanding framework conditions. The state government is dedicated to the Saxon excellence. It is committed to supporting TU Dresden so that it can successfully bid for this title within its current Excellence Strategy.”



### **State Minister for Science Dr. Stange: TUD is Strong in Research**

“TU Dresden’s international research strength has been repeatedly proven in the last years. The funding within the previous Excellence Initiative has created structures at TU Dresden, which enabled cutting-edge research. It has advanced to the university research elite throughout Germany and has attracted pioneering scientists from all over the world to Dresden. This new strength and dynamism must come to fruition through the funding by the Excellence Strategy. I am keeping my fingers crossed that the first hurdle will be mastered successfully and that as many project drafts as possible will be invited to submit full proposals.”

### **TUD-Rector Müller-Steinhagen: Globally Renowned University**

“The competition for excellence will certainly be even tougher than in the past years. However, TUD does not have to shy away from this competition. In the past five years, TUD has significantly improved the decisive development parameters such as publications, ERC-grants, rankings and awards. We do not compare ourselves merely on a national level, but most and foremost on an international level and by now, we are perceived globally as a leading university.”



### **Schedule for the Excellence Strategy**

**3 April 2017** Submission deadline for draft proposals for Clusters of Excellence

**28 September 2017** Decision on draft proposals for Clusters of Excellence, followed by invitation to submit full proposals

**19 February 2018** Submission of full proposals for Clusters of Excellence

**27 September 2018** Funding decision on full proposals for Clusters of Excellence

**December 2018** Submission of proposals for Universities of Excellence

**1 January 2019** Commencement of funding for Clusters of Excellence

**1 November 2019** Commencement of funding for Universities of Excellence

## Eight Cluster Draft Proposals with Interdisciplinary Profile

All eight cluster proposals are part of TU Dresden's development planning and are tailored according to the interdisciplinary [Research Priority Areas \(RPAs\)](#): Three cluster proposals are in the Health Sciences, Biomedicine and Bio-engineering RPA, three are in the Smart Materials RPA and a further two are in the Information Technology and Microelectronics RPA. Since all five TUD Research Priority Areas are interdisciplinarily intertwined, virtually all scientific disciplines are involved in the cluster proposals. With at least two TUD-Clusters of Excellence selected, TUD shall be eligible to apply for the second funding line "University of Excellence".

## Heidelberg, Würzburg and Aachen are Partners at Consortium Proposals

TUD submits three of the eight proposals in alliance with other universities ([Heidelberg University](#), [Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg](#), [RWTH Aachen](#)). TUD is managing the funds in the joint proposal with Aachen. In the case of Heidelberg and Würzburg, Heidelberg University and Julius-Maximilians-Universität are managing the funds. The bar for the participation in the Excellence competition is set high. Excellent research projects are required, where recognised leading scientists and promising young researchers co-operate. Supporting structures and strategies of the clusters are evaluated as well as the entire university and location-specific environment.

## Excellent Research Environment

From 2014 onwards, TUD has made a great leap forward in the international ranking ([THE-Ranking](#)), i.e. from positions 251-275 to presently 164. Furthermore, TUD is among the 20 most innovative universities in Europe ("[Reuters Top 100: Europe's Most Innovative Universities](#)").

Since the 1990s, the number of students has tripled and has been at a constant high level of around 35,000 students since 2005. TUD's third-party funding saw an increase of 136% from EUR 102.7 million (2005) to EUR

243 million (2015). TUD currently hosts 10 Collaborative Research Centres (CRCs), 21 ERC grant recipients, five large-scale BMBF projects (C<sup>3</sup>, FAST, ZIK B CUBE, TUD-SYLBBER, Protect AD) as well as [two Clusters of Excellence as part of the Excellence Initiative](#), [one Graduate School and the "Institutional Strategy"](#). In addition, there are seven Graduate Schools, three international Graduate Schools as well as three Graduate Schools integrated into the CRCs, which are all funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Furthermore, 13 Graduate Schools are financed by foundations, science and industry partners. During the initial years of "[Horizon 2020](#)", TUD has been one of the most successful universities in Germany with 62 company holdings and EUR 36.54 million of third-party funding acquired (as of 31 May 2016). This provisional result ranks TUD third, after the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and TU Munich. Moreover, TUD was part of the state quality campaign "[Teacher Training](#)".

The number of TUD's "Web of Science" publications climbed from 1,304 p.a. in 2001 (888 with national and 416 with international partners) to 4,062 p.a. in 2015 (1,951 with national and 2,111 with international partners), totalling 38,792 publications in this time period.

## ExStra - Facts and Figures

**Strategy of Excellence** The new programme "[ExStra](#)" will have two funding lines:

**Clusters of Excellence** for project-based funding in internationally competitive fields of research at universities or university consortia

**Universities of Excellence** to strengthen universities as individual institutions or as university consortia.

**Purpose** To support project-based funding in internationally competitive research fields at a university or university consortium; hone research profiles and promote prioritisation at universities; create excellent training and career opportunities for early career researchers.

**Proposal Requirements** Clusters of Excellence serve to strengthen the research profiles of applicant universities by enhancing priority areas and providing prospects for development. They build on outstanding previous work and address the institutions' strengths and weaknesses in relevant performance areas.

Important funding criteria are: Excellence of research, track record of participating researchers, high quality of the university's supporting structures in the Cluster of Excellence and supportive and high-performance environment for the Cluster of Excellence.

**Eligibility Requirements** Proposals may be submitted by universities and consortia of two, in exceptional cases three applicant universities.

**Type and Extent of Funding** Clusters of Excellence funded under the Excellence Strategy can receive between EUR 3 million and EUR 10 million annually. Funding covers personnel costs, direct project costs and investment costs. The funding amount for a Cluster of Excellence includes a programme allowance for indirect project costs of 22 percent of the approved and expended project funds. On the basis of a proposal, additional funds of up to EUR 1 million per year can be requested as a university allowance.

**Funding Duration** Clusters of Excellence are funded for seven years (1 January 2019 through 31 December 2025). A second funding period of seven years is possible.

**Requirements of Universities of Excellence** The funding as a University of Excellence requires the approval of at least two Clusters of Excellence at the same university, respectively three for consortia.

**Type and volume of the Funding of Universities of Excellence** In the first round of the Excellence Initiative, approximately EUR 148 million are envisaged for the funding of eleven Universities of Excellence and university con-

sortia. The level of funding, which is dependent on the submitted proposal, is estimated at between EUR 10 and 15 million p.a., and at a maximum of EUR 28 million for consortia.

**Duration of Funding of Universities of Excellence** They are subject to an independent and external evaluation with a selective nature, taking place every seven years. Requirements for joint funding are deemed to be fulfilled and funding is continued only on the condition that universities or university consortia have reached their goal of expanding their leading position in research, and have proved their outstanding scientific performance on an international scale. In addition, every seven years, Universities of Excellence need to be granted the necessary two or, in the case of consortia, three Clusters of Excellence competing with new applications.

**Bridge Funding** The current Excellence Initiative projects run until 31 October 2017. After this date, a bridge or completion funding for a maximum period of 24 months comes into effect either until the commencement of the new funding as part of the Excellence Strategy (i.e. if proposals for the Clusters of Excellence and University of Excellence are successful) or until the expiration of the 24-month bridge funding period.

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