

HOMFOR

Homburg Research Funding Program of the Medical Faculty of Saarland University

Saarland

Funding period 2025

1. Objective

The HOMFOR program, offered by the Faculty of Medicine at Saarland University, aims to create enhanced conditions for high-quality, internationally competitive, and interdisciplinary research. The program supports both patient-oriented clinical research and fundamental medical research. Funding decisions within HOMFOR are based solely on the scientific excellence of the proposed project. HOMFOR is a key instrument for ensuring the quality of medical research in Homburg, as well as for promoting promising new research directions within the faculty. Additionally, it helps scientists at Saarland University's Faculty of Medicine strengthen their ability to secure external funding, laying the foundation for the maintenance and expansion of both national and international research networks.

2. Types of applications

HOMFOR applications can be submitted under one of the following categories:

(A) Funding for Early Career Researchers

- a. 1-year funding for projects of young researchers**
- b. HOMFORexcellent (3-year funding)**

(B) Start-up Project Funding

Applicants must ensure that no simultaneous submissions are made with thematic overlap to other internal or external research funding programs, including state funding. The University Research Committee and the Research Commission (FK) have agreed to exchange application documents. If thematic overlap is identified, applications will be rejected by both committees without review.

Applicants must also confirm that their submitted proposal does not overlap with other current or proposed applications from their own clinic or institute. To prevent similar submissions from the same department, applicants are required to detail and explicitly differentiate their applications from other current or past proposals from their clinic or institute.

3. Funding Instruments

For categories (A) and (B), funding is limited to consumables. Funds may NOT be reallocated during the project. Applications will only be considered if an accurate, itemized cost list is provided. Funding for travel, literature, scholarships, visiting scientists, or personnel costs (except for HOMFOR excellent) cannot be requested. Additionally, if the necessary approvals for animal experiments, ethics votes, or S2 approvals are not in place by the final commission meeting, the application will be rejected without further review.

4. Application Procedure

Applications to the HOMFOR program must be submitted electronically by doctoral members of the Faculty of Medicine at Saarland University (applicants must hold a doctorate at the time of submission). The submission deadline is announced annually by the Dean of Research.

As decided by the FK on 20.12.2012, LOM-eligible individuals (cost center holders) are NOT eligible to apply. The following points must be strictly followed:

- Applications that are not submitted electronically via the HOMFOR application database will be rejected without review.
- Applicants who have not received their doctorate (by the HOMFOR deadline) will be rejected without review.
- Applications that do not comply with formal guidelines will be rejected without review.
- Applicants must ensure that their application is complete and complies with all regulations.
- For HOMFOR Early Career Researchers and Start-up applications, a CV in the official DFG format (including the 10 most important publications) must be submitted.
- Only ONE application can be submitted per applicant. Multiple submissions will result in all applications being rejected without review.

- From the third HOMFOR application onwards, applicants must provide a HOMFOR history detailing publications and third-party funding resulting from previous HOMFOR support, submitted as one PDF.
- From the second HOMFOR Early Career Researchers application onwards, applicants must explain in detail why further funding is necessary, also submitted as a single PDF.
- Applications exceeding the financial limit (minus the applicant's contribution) will be rejected without review.
- The requested financial volume (minus own contribution) exceeds the financial framework will not be reviewed by HOMFOR, but rejected.
- HOMFORexcellent recipients must submit a third-party funding concept by the end of their second year of funding.
- At the end of the 3-year HOMFORexcellent funding period, grantees must submit and have already applied for significant third-party funding.
- Applications with outstanding final reports from previous HOMFOR projects will not be reviewed.

5. Evaluation of Applications

Applications will be reviewed by two members of the Research Commission and one member of the clinical department within the Faculty of Medicine. The evaluation criteria include:

1. Quality of the proposed project (originality, relevance)
2. Applicant's qualifications and past publications
3. Feasibility and the level of effort required
4. Previous third-party funding and project support (for Start-up applications only)
5. Ratio of previous HOMFOR funding to third-party funding or related publications (for Start-up applications only)
6. Availability of final reports for previously funded HOMFOR projects
7. Financial balance in previous HOMFOR projects (if applicable)

6. Performance Review

A final report must be submitted within 6 months after the funding period ends. New applications without final reports will not be reviewed. The final report should not exceed one A4 page and must address the following points:

- Publications resulting from the project
- Third-party funding secured as a result of the project
- A maximum of half a page as a final summary

Publications must acknowledge HOMFOR funding (refer to Section 5.5).

7. Description of Application Forms

A) Funding for Early Career Researchers

Aa) 1-year projects for early career scientists:

Funding is available for innovative projects across all fields of medicine, with the aim of enabling young researchers (up to 5 years post-doctorate, max. age 35, with parental leave considered) to secure external third-party funding. The funding period is one year and cannot be extended. A maximum of €12,500 may be requested. Applications exceeding this amount will not be reviewed.

Ab) HOMFORexcellent (3 years of funding):

At the end of the 1-year funding period, applicants may submit a separate electronic application to the FK for HOMFORexcellent funding. Candidates must present their projects at a scientific symposium to a panel of experts. Two projects will be selected for full funding, which includes a doctoral position (E13/2, according to current DFG lump sums) and €12,500 for consumables. Further details on this selection process will be provided in due course.

B) Start-up Funding:

Funding for innovative projects across all areas of medicine aimed at preparing applications for third-party funding. The funding period is 1 year. A maximum of €30,000 may be requested. Applications exceeding this amount will not be reviewed.