

News Release

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Grant to boost high-risk, high-reward research and internationalization: Green light for EU co-funding of TUM-IAS Fellowships

The European Union's Research Executive Agency has given the Technische Universität München (TUM) a green light to begin negotiations on a five-year co-funding grant. In a ranking of 70 proposals for COFUND support through the Marie Curie Program, a TUM proposal requesting 6.2 million euros to expand selected programs of the TUM Institute for Advanced Study was one of just 18 to win the top "A" rating. The ultimate funding amount and other details are yet to be negotiated. The main aim is to strengthen three TUM-IAS fellowship programs that are strongly focused on fostering international collaboration and unleashing the creativity of innovative younger scientists.

The TUM Institute for Advanced Study was founded in 2005 to develop new fields of scientific and technological research through interdisciplinary, international, and intergenerational collaboration in an atmosphere of inspiration, creativity, and freedom. It is unique among institutes for advanced study in several ways: in having a bias toward topics, even in fundamental research, with the potential to spawn new technologies and address problems of society, industry, human health, and the environment; in being autonomous and yet fully integrated into the life and laboratories of a technical university; and in offering fellowships to industrial as well as academic researchers. There are currently about sixty active TUM-IAS Fellows, from 18 countries. Fellows receive three years' support to explore high-risk, high-reward ideas with minimal administrative burden and maximal flexibility.

The creation and operation of the TUM-IAS have been funded primarily by Germany's Excellence Initiative, a major multi-year investment by the federal and state governments in the quality and competitiveness of university research. In addition, TUM-IAS Fellows have been highly successful in winning third-party funding, and the Institute's ten-million-euro headquarters building was built and donated by the BMW Group.

"I view this opportunity for EU co-funding, on the one hand, as a strong endorsement of our original idea and the achievements of the TUM-IAS Fellows," said TUM President Wolfgang A. Herrmann, "and on the other hand as further proof that the Institute is on its way toward the eventual goal of sustainable, long-term operation at the heart of our university."

The proposed co-funding will expand support for three TUM-IAS Fellowship categories in particular:

- The Hans Fischer Fellowship brings in top-level senior and junior researchers from all over the world to spend a substantial amount of time developing new ideas in conjunction with TUM research groups.
- The Carl von Linde Junior Fellowship gives very promising junior professors the chance to develop innovative research programs; free from other obligations, they retain the right to coach their own doctoral candidates and to have independent research funds.
- The Rudolf Diesel Fellowship enables outstanding researchers from industry (or society) to explore, free from business constraints, innovative technological or scientific ideas; in this category, Marie Curie COFUND support will fund Rudolf Diesel Fellows from outside Germany.

TUM-IAS Fellowships outside the scope of the COFUND program are the Rudolf Diesel Fellowships granted to German researchers and the Carl von Linde Senior Fellowships, which are awarded to established TUM professors.

TUM-IAS Director Patrick Dewilde said, "The marriage of the TUM-IAS Fellowship program with the EU COFUND program will create a durable influx of top-notch expertise in the Munich area and help to establish it as one of the foremost breeding places for science and technology in the world."

Technische Universitaet Muenchen (TUM) is one of Europe's leading universities. It has roughly 420 professors, 7,500 academic and non-academic staff (including those at the university hospital "Rechts der Isar"), and 26,000 students. It focuses on the engineering sciences, natural sciences, life sciences, medicine, and economic sciences. After winning numerous awards, it was selected as an "Elite University" in 2006 by the Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat) and the German Research Foundation (DFG). The university's global network includes an outpost in Singapore. TUM is dedicated to the ideal of a top-level research based entrepreneurial university. <http://www.tum.de>