

## I. OBJECTIVE

Einstein Strategic Professorships are targeted recruitments of leading researchers from abroad who are of outstanding importance to developing both the applying university's profile and Berlin's research environment. The programme's aim is to support the Berlin universities – in collaboration with local, publicly funded non-university research institutes, where suitable – to implement research strategies, build their research profiles, explore and advance new research areas, as well as nurture their strengths and appeal to outstanding talents. Einstein Strategic Professorships are a decisive contribution to sustainably enhancing Berlin's international competitiveness.

Since the programme's inception in 2018, the Einstein Foundation has been generously supported with more than €20 million in funding, in particular through donations from the Damp Stiftung. In order to attract further funding from private sources, the State of Berlin provides matching funds that are directed towards the programme proper, as well as additional financial support to ensure recruited talents can be retained beyond the initial five-year funding period (see Section VII).

## II. ELIGIBILITY

Candidates should be researchers who are internationally recognized as pioneering scholars in their respective fields or are close to establishing their reputation internationally. Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, Universität der Künste Berlin, as well as Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin are eligible to apply.<sup>1</sup> Applications may also be submitted jointly with publicly funded Berlin-based non-university research institutions (e.g. institutes of the Max Planck Society, the Helmholtz Association, the Leibniz Association, and the Fraunhofer Society); such joint applications must provide information on the candidate's planned activities at each of the respective institutions.

## III. FUNDING

The Einstein Foundation provides funding for the professor's position as well as for additional directly and indirectly incurred expenses (staff, equipment, research-related consumables). Once funding has been approved, the applying institution is responsible for appointing (e.g. by issuing a search waiver and directly appointing him/her) or employing the candidate, initiates appointment negotiations and creates the prerequisites for the appointment or employment of the approved candidate. As a rule, the negotiations should be finalized, and a contract signed no later than twelve months after submission of the Foundation's letter of approval. Any extension of this deadline must be requested and approved by the Foundation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Einstein BUA Strategic Professorship programme, which was phased out in May 2024, limits eligibility to the four BUA partners and allows applications for candidates based in Germany. The funding period is three years, with no follow-up funding provided by the Einstein Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> This may include, if necessary, a temporary leave of absence during the transition phase.

#### **IV. FUNDING PERIOD**

In general, Einstein Strategic Professorships are funded for five years via private and/or public funds. Cost-neutral extensions of the funding period are possible. To permanently retain appointed candidates in Berlin beyond the initial funding phase, the Einstein Foundation receives additional funding from the State of Berlin (see Section VII). Candidates will hold the title of “Einstein Professor” for the entire duration of their work in Berlin (including their appointments following the initial funding phase).

#### **V. APPLICATION PROCESS**

Application deadlines can be found on the Foundation’s website. Besides detailing the reasons for suggesting the proposed candidate, applications must specify how the candidate will nurture the research or artistic profile of the applying institution and Berlin’s appeal as a science and research hub. Furthermore, they must outline how the Einstein Strategic Professorship would contribute to the institution’s medium-term strategic development, including (other) future appointments and research foci. Applications must further list the incentives the respective institution intends to offer the candidate – in addition to a lifetime position and the funding provided by the Einstein Foundation – in order to retain them in Berlin.

Please note that applications must be submitted in English.

#### **VI. USE OF FUNDS**

Grants can only be disbursed as third-party funding through the host university or Charité – Universitätsmedizin.

#### **VII. FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT**

To help the respective institution cover its expenses following the initial funding period, the State of Berlin provides follow-up funding of up to €200k per year per professorship via the Einstein Foundation. On request, the Einstein Foundation may provide additional resources in exceptional cases (e.g. in case of chronic illness), provided funding is available.

Applications for follow-up funding must provide a multi-year budget plan detailing the institution’s total amount of resources allocated to the professorship and the funding requested from the Einstein Foundation. In addition, a support letter from the head of the applying institution must illustrate the progress and success achieved in the initial funding period, the professorship’s relevance to the institution, and the institution’s commitment to providing a substantial portion of the professorship’s funding in the future.

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