


# CZS endowed professorships Universities



Call for proposals for universities  
in the CZS focus topics of artificial intelligence,  
resource efficiency and life science technologies

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Application deadlines: 30 May and 30 November every year

## 1 Thematic focus and target setting

The Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung (CZS) has been funding endowed professorships for a long time. In doing so, the foundation strives to strengthen the knowledge centres in the three funding states of Thuringia, Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate.

Applications for endowed professorships must be in one of the three focus topics for the Carl Zeiss Stiftung:

The focus topic of **Artificial intelligence** addresses one of the most important and promising technologies of the future. In this area, the focus of the funding is in these four sectors: Fundamental aspects of artificial intelligence, enabling and supporting technologies, application and didactics for computer science.

In the focus topic of **Resource efficiency**, funding is provided in the area of the comprehensive closed-loop economy. In this area, the CZS focuses its funding on four sectors: Energy systems of the future, sustainable material innovations, fair raw materials for new technologies and resource-saving digitalisation.

**Life science technologies** covers interdisciplinary challenges at the interfaces of life sciences and engineering with the motivation of innovating in personalised medicine. For this reason, the CZS funds research into sensors, surfaces, data and synthetics with the shared goal of achieving a better understanding of biological processes and developing new technologies.

You can find out more about the focus topics on the CZS [website](http://www.carl-zeiss-stiftung.de) (www.carl-zeiss-stiftung.de).

The *CZS endowed professorships at universities* programme enables universities to recruit outstanding STEM scientists for their research location. The application is submitted by the

university in partnership with an excellent candidate for the professorship. The candidate must not have accepted an offer at the time at which the application is submitted. The professorship must fit in with the current profile of the university in a convincing manner and must also offer added value to existing professorships in terms of interdisciplinary collaboration. The individual should have an outstanding international reputation in their research field and fall within one of the focus topics above in terms of content. Another key feature is a clear focus on practical application, which must be identifiable in the individual's profile and their research topics. The professorships should strategically complement the practical nature of the universities' research profiles.

## **2 Scope and object of funding**

Funding can be requested for up to a total of

**EUR 5,000,000.**

The funding period is up to ten years.

The following are eligible for funding as part of the programme:

- Funds for scientific and technical staff
- Material and investment funds
- Funds for scientific communication and outreach.

The universities are free to divide up the funding for which the application is submitted. A maximum of 20 per cent of the total funding amount may be used for investments. The requested funding must be justified accordingly.

The Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung (CZS) expects the university to make an independent contribution for the entire funding period, amounting to at least one full-time role for a scientific staff member.

When calculating staff funding, the legal requirements of state university laws with regard to pension provision and other benefits must be observed in addition to any rate increases and increases in line with inflation. The CZS will not retrospectively provide any additional funds to finance cost increases. The amount of the eligible remuneration of the W3 professorship is not limited by CZS.

The CZS expects the number of employed doctoral candidates to match the amount of work associated with the project. The CZS welcomes applications from full-time doctoral candidates. Furthermore, it expects that the employment contracts of scientific employees are concluded for the entire period of the respective qualification phase regardless of the duration of the funding.

The funding period is up to ten years from the point in time at which the professor starts in their role. The professors must start within two years of the funding being approved by the CZS. Furthermore, the professorship must be continued by the university after the funding expires.

Only applications from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields will receive funding.



### **3 Eligibility to apply**

The CZS funds CZS-endowed professorships in the federal states of Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Thuringia. The following state universities are eligible to submit applications:

**Baden-Württemberg:** Freiburg, Heidelberg, Hohenheim, Karlsruhe, Konstanz, Mannheim, Stuttgart, Tübingen, Ulm

**Thuringia:** Erfurt, Ilmenau, Jena, Weimar

**Rhineland-Palatinate:** Kaiserslautern-Landau, Koblenz, Mainz, Trier

Each university may only submit one application in the selection process for a CZS-endowed professorship at any one time. A further application may only be submitted once a funding decision has been reached.

The candidate for the endowed professorship may not be employed at a research institution in the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate, Thuringia or Baden-Württemberg at the point in time at which the application is submitted.

A university submitting an application can also submit a joint application with other non-university research institutions. The applying university must take the lead in this undertaking. This means that the organisational processing, including funding allocation, must exclusively be carried out via the university that submits the application. The CZS expects that the majority of the funds will remain with the university.

## 4 Selection procedure and criteria

Independent scientists will scrutinise all submitted applications in a written expert opinion. The applicants (representatives of university management, representatives of departmental management, candidate) will be invited to present their project to a scientific selection committee and answer questions from the committee members.

Applications can be submitted to the CZS by 30 May and 30 November every year. The selection committee meets each year in the following November and May. The CZS will make the final funding decision based on the recommendations by the selection committee. There is no entitlement to funding. No justification will be provided for rejection decisions; in particular, no information will be given about the assessors' evaluations.

Important selection criteria in the review process include:

- Strategic importance of the professorship for the university's research profile and structural development
- Innovative and pioneering topic in the area of artificial intelligence, resource efficiency or life science technologies
- Contribution of the endowed professorship to strengthening an existing subject/research area or establishing a new, strategically significant research area
- Contribution of the endowed professorship to strengthening teaching (adding to the curriculum, interdisciplinarity of teaching)
- Research and teaching profile and international reputation of the candidate (previous scientific work, publications, patent registrations, etc.)
- Practical application of the candidate's previous and planned research profile
- Suitability of the individual for the department's strategic orientation at the nominated university and the university's research profile as a whole

- Role of the candidate in existing and planned partnerships within the university and with external partners, e.g. research organisations, companies or in networks/associations
- Social and economic relevance of the research field
- Measures by the university for continuation

## 5 Application

Applications may only be submitted via university management.

Universities intending to submit an application must **submit a letter of intent** to the Carl Zeiss Stiftung. The letter of intent includes

1. a cover sheet with all relevant master data
2. One page introducing the candidate, their research area and the basic focus of the professorship
3. consent to storage of personal data

Letters of intent must be submitted at least 6 weeks before an application is submitted.

**Both the letter of intent and the application must be submitted exclusively digitally to the following address:**

Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung  
Dr Phil-Alan Gärtig  
[foerderantrag@carl-zeiss-stiftung.de](mailto:foerderantrag@carl-zeiss-stiftung.de)

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Gärtig ([phil-alan.gaertig@carl-zeiss-stiftung.de](mailto:phil-alan.gaertig@carl-zeiss-stiftung.de)).

## Application guidelines

### 1 General formal requirements

- The application must be submitted in English.
- Arial font, size 11 and single line spacing must be used for the applications.
- Applications, including all the necessary documents, must be submitted to the Carl Zeiss Stiftung exclusively electronically: The applications, with attachment, must be submitted as **one** PDF document without password protection or access restrictions regarding reading, copying and printing. The PDF must be made available to the Foundation by email (as an attachment or link). Physical data carriers (CD-ROM, DVD, etc.) cannot be processed.

### 2 Documents to be submitted

The universities are asked to provide the following documents, and the completeness of these documents is a prerequisite for receiving funding:

#### 2.1 Letter of intent

Submitting an application is not possible if no letter of intent has been submitted. The letter of intent enables the CZS to prepare the evaluation process for the application.

The letter of intent must include the following details:

1. Cover sheet (one page)
  - a) Applicant university (for joint applications, name of the non-university research organisation)
  - b) Managing department for the application and preliminary contact
  - c) Professorship subject area (the denomination may be modified in the final application, but the fundamental content area of the project must remain the same)
  - d) Name of the CZS focus topic including area that the application relates to
  - e) Name of the candidate and subject area
  - f) Status of discussions and/or the process
  - g) Potentially suggestions, justified in bullet points, of up to three assessors who the university believes would be suitable to assess the application in a



- professional and impartial manner according to the DFG criteria. Please provide contact details.
2. Content-related description of the professorship's research profile (one page)  
Introduction of the candidate, their research focus and basic orientation of the professorship
  3. Annex  
Signed consent for storage of personal data in accordance with the template provided by the CZS.

## 2.2 Application

The written application from the university (max. 15 A4 pages excluding annexes) must contain the following details in this order:

1. Cover sheet with master data
  - a. Applicant university (for joint applications, name of the non-university research organisation)
  - b. Application coordinator (name, work address, telephone and email address, web link)
  - c. Title of the professorship
  - d. Institute/department where the professorship will be based
  - e. Name of the CZS focus topic including area that the application relates to
  - f. Financial details: funding requested from the CZS (personnel, material costs and investments), independent contribution by the university
  - g. Funding period requested (start and end date)
2. Abstract  
Clear summary of the professorship's orientation in German and English (maximum half a DIN A4 page each, together on a separate page).
3. Content-related and strategic goals
  - a. Motivation, scientific goals and scientific innovation potential: What are the (up to four) most important research questions? What are the unique selling points of the professorship?
  - b. Structural and strategic goals, alignment of the professorship with the strategic orientation, further development and profile of the university and department
  - c. Integration of the professorship into existing (university) structures
4. Candidate's profile
  - a. Scientific excellence and international visibility
  - b. Candidate's subject area and description of how this will add to the university's profile
5. Research status

- a. Significant national and international developments in the relevant research area
  - b. Current relevant research focus topics at the university
  - c. Important and/or competing research groups/professorships that are active in Germany and abroad in the relevant research field
  - d. Expected further development of the research at the university by the professorship
6. Transfer and practical application
- a. Social relevance of the professorship
  - b. Practical application of the planned research within the framework of the professorship
  - c. Previous practical activities by the candidate
7. Teaching
- a. Previous teaching at the university in the professorship's field
  - b. Expected further development of teaching by the professorship incl. planned teaching duties of the professorship
  - c. Candidate's teaching experience
8. Networking
- Planned networking of the professorship with external partners (e.g. research organisations or companies)
9. Organisation and management
- a. Current status of the application process and negotiations
  - b. Measures taken by the university to promote scientific talent and the candidate's previous activities in this area
  - c. Measures taken by the university to actively promote diversity and the candidate's previous activities in this area
10. Sustainability and permanence
- Content and organisational/structural plans to make the professorship permanent and potentially also additional roles at the university and in the department (and, for a joint project, at the non-university research organisation)
11. Financial details
- Please provide a brief explanation of your financial plans and point out any specific details where necessary, e.g. planned roles, important investments, independent contribution, reallocation of funding. This section should give the reviewers an overview of your financial plans.
- Please detail which basic facilities (staff, laboratory space, large equipment, etc.) will be provided by the university and when. For joint applications, please detail how and to what extent funds will be forwarded to the non-university research organisation. In order to clarify the project budget, please enclose the financial plan from Annex 2 in the annex to the

application (see 2.3 Annex to the application, Point 3). It is not necessary to include the financial plan in the main part of the application.

## 2.3 Annex to application

Please attach the following documents to your application:

1. Form about disciplines (Annex 1: Information about the subjects related to the professorship)
2. Schedule for the rest of the application process
3. Financing plan in accordance with Annex 2

Please enclose a financing plan with the application as an annex, which should be created as an Excel table using the template and submitted as an xlsx file. The individual cost items should be rounded to the nearest 1,000 euros. The current DFG personnel average rates should be used as the basis for calculating staff costs. Expected rate increases/inflation adjustments during the funding period should be taken into consideration for calculating the requested funding amount.

The following details must be included:

- a. Independent contribution by the university  
The independent contribution should demonstrate the university's dedication. The independent contribution can take the form of additional staff positions, material resources and similar (at least one full-time role for scientific staff [E13]).

4. Independent contribution  
Separate binding declaration from university management concerning the nature and amount of the independent contribution and permanence of the professorship
5. Candidate's CV  
including publication list, third-party funding list, previous teaching activities and further qualification proof (research prizes, patents, roles, etc.)
6. Organisations  
List of organisations involved in the application project with the associated addresses and web links (institutes and organisations of the university and, where applicable, other external organisations)
7. Cooperation partners  
Planned cooperation partners in the university and outside the university (e.g. other universities, research organisations, companies, museums, etc.) with the associated addresses and web links. If transfer measures are chosen as a structural approach, the willingness of the cooperation partner to participate in the project must be demonstrated in the form of an LOI.

8. Research data concept

Concept for handling research data (with regard to data protection, open source, open access, shared databases, reproducibility).

These guidelines on submitting applications, including annexes and the call for proposals, can be accessed at <https://www.carl-zeiss-stiftung.de/programm/czs-stiftungsprofessuren-universität/ausschreibung>.