

Viadrina Policy for Granting Funds from the Flexible Fund (Flex Fund) of the Equal Opportunity Department

Purpose

The currently valid target agreement between the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture (MWFK, *Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur*) and European University Viadrina (EUV) defines as a central and overarching task “[...] to change the existing framework conditions, where necessary, in such a way that the different potentials of all university members and staff are facilitated equally and at all qualification levels and leadership positions in science, research and administration.” With a view to promoting equal opportunities, EUV is to create “[...] flexible facilitation options in critical phases of the academic career”.

Equal opportunities at Viadrina means: Students and scientists work in a university environment that recognises diversity, focuses on potential and develops skills. At the same time, discrimination is reduced and prevented. The aim is to advance educational equity by enabling diverse access, accompanying and supporting non-privileged students, especially at critical stages of their university careers. The purpose being to expand Viadrina with research approaches as well as teaching-learning settings and hence to create a more diverse science culture.

Following completion of the diversity audit of the Donors’ Association, Viadrina is planning to include other diverse groups of people in its funding, after having focused primarily on women’s and family support so far. This is specifically aimed at scientists who experience discrimination and are structurally disadvantaged on the basis of their ethnic origin/nationality, gender, sexual identity or orientation, social origin or position, disability and/or race. Since individuals can bring several different diversity characteristics to the table, it is important to look at them in context in order to take a comprehensive view of equal opportunities.

The respective faculties are, in particular, responsible for the design and implementation of diversity-aware personnel development in the academic field. They are primarily responsible for actively promoting a gender and diversity-sensitive as well as family-friendly structure. In addition, the Equal Opportunity Department is setting up a so-called Flexible Fund with financial resources from the target agreement. This supports the bridging of critical phases in an academic career with individual measures, which are in each case adapted to the individual’s specific situation.

There is no entitlement to funds. The decision is made on the basis of eligibility requirements within the limits of the available funds.

Recipients

Scientists in the qualification phase are eligible to apply. In exceptional cases, students in the final phase can also be considered if they are interested in pursuing a doctorate. (Junior) professors are not eligible for funding.

Funding for children

In individual cases, it is also possible to apply for financial support for children (childcare and travel costs). All scientists (even if they are not in a qualification phase) and students in all study phases are eligible to apply here.

Eligibility requirements

In order to qualify for funding from the Flexible Fund, the following criteria must be met: Applicants are exposed to forms of structural discrimination (see 'Purpose') and are at a critical stage of their academic career.

Critical phases can be very different for both career-related and personal reasons.

Possible critical situations during qualification (not exhaustive)

- Final phases
- Transitions between qualification phases (doctorate – postdoc – professorship)
- Professional decision-making phases: (Re)orientation within the chosen career path, thoughts on terminating the academic career and reorientation
- Change of supervisor (conflicts, illness, death)
- Re-entry after longer absence (unemployment, practical phase, parental leave, care leave)
- Institution-related exceptional situations (closure of institutes, restructuring, unfilled positions, etc.)
- Stay abroad (not possible for financial reasons or without family)

Possible critical personal situations (not exhaustive)

- Sudden severe/long-term illness, onset of chronic illness, accident with long-term consequences
- Severe illness/death of a relative
- Unforeseen additional need for caregiving/caring tasks (for instance, following separation)
- Unforeseen psychological stress (for instance, miscarriage or burnout)

Object of funding

Since critical situations can vary greatly from case to case, the appropriate funding instruments are selected in each case. Both financial and means-tested support options are applied. These include, for instance:

- Career counselling and coaching
- Psychological counselling
- Short-term scholarships
- Support personnel
- Financial support for children up to 12 years of age (grants for childcare as well as travel and accommodation costs)

For students of all study phases, (pro-rata) funding is possible in individual cases. The prerequisite is that the regular childcare (daycare centre, childminders, school, after-school care) schemes do not apply and that the child's care is necessary in order to complete studies (for instance, participation in a course outside of childcare hours). In this case, Viadrina will reimburse costs incurred by students up to an amount of €100 per semester and child upon application.

For scientists, (pro-rata) funding for childcare as well as travel and accommodation costs is only possible in critical phases of their career, which, for example, cannot be planned and/or financed from their own means.

In this case, Viadrina will reimburse costs up to an amount of €100 per semester and child upon application.

Possible situations include (non-exhaustive list):

- Childcare for re-entry into a job after maternity leave and parental leave (no access to regular care in a daycare centre/daycare)
- Emergency care (for instance, in the case of illness of the child/absence of the caregiver at times when the recipient must attend a university event and/or work on their qualification)
- Childcare and/or reimbursement of travel expenses (participation in scientific conferences, further education and public university events)

Procedure

Funding from the Flex Fund is publicly announced and advertised.

A short application procedure and a quick decision-making process help to provide timely and appropriate support in a crisis and/or in critical career phases if funding is approved.

Applications can be submitted on an ongoing basis. The Equal Opportunity Department is the point of contact for this. The application is initially made via initial consultation with a contact person from the Equal Opportunity Department (management, Equal Opportunities Officer, Family Officer) in order to determine the specific need for support. The interview is documented and, together with their personal details (application form), then serves as the basis for the decision. The application will be decided upon by a commission composed of the following members: Head of the Equal Opportunity Department, Equal Opportunities Officer and Vice President Equal Opportunities.

Granting of funds

Following formal examination and a majority decision¹ by the commission as well as a grant notice, funds will be granted until the funds available for the respective year have been allocated. The procedure will be evaluated after one year.

Contact person for applications

Bettina Gebhardt
Equal Opportunity Department
Phone: +49 (0)335 5534-2597
E-mail chancengleichheit@europa-uni.de

Entry into force

Frankfurt (Oder), 26 April 2022

¹ In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Senate in the version dated 21 February 2010