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Regulations concerning the support of Interdisciplinarity Grants at the University of Bern ("BIND Grants")

The Executive Board of the University,

based on Article 2 paragraph 2 and paragraph 3 and Article 39 paragraph 1 letters a and b of the Law of September 5, 1996 on the University (UniG),

at the request of the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation,

has decided:

Preamble

As part of its Strategy 2030, the University of Bern has set itself the goal of increasing interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. As a means of fostering interdisciplinary research, the Executive Board of the University announces the *Bern Interdisciplinarity Grants* (hereinafter referred to as "BIND Grants").

The submission of large interdisciplinary research projects requires intensive collaboration between researchers from different disciplines. With the "BIND Grants" as start-up funding, research group leaders shall be able to better prepare themselves for application submission to national and international programs. The aim is to improve the position of Bernese researchers in the acquisition of national or international third-party funding in the field of interdisciplinary research.

Art. 1 Objective of the "BIND Grants" and subject of these regulations

¹ The "BIND Grants" provide start-up funding for new teams of two to four researchers from the University of Bern, the Inselspital or the University Psychiatric Services (UPD) who

intend to submit a joint application for interdisciplinary project funding to an external funding institution. The aim of this support is to promote interdisciplinary research at the University.

² These regulations set out the framework for awarding and distributing university funding for "BIND Grants".

Art. 2 Principles and terminology

¹ The project and the main application must be interdisciplinary in nature. An application is considered interdisciplinary if the following requirements are met:

- a* the research objectives require the integration of elements (e.g. theories, methods, concepts) from two or more disciplines;
- b* the combination of these elements is not yet common in the field;
- c* the various disciplines contribute to the proposed research from different perspectives.

² At the request of the Vice-Rectorate for Research and Innovation, the Executive Board of the University determines the total amount of the annual contribution available for the awarding of "BIND Grants".

³ There is no legal entitlement to receiving a "BIND Grant".

⁴ The following terminology is used in these regulations: "application", "project" refer to the "BIND Grants"; "main application", "main project" refer to the actual third-party funding applications to the funding agencies.

Art. 3 Size of the funding

The amount awarded per application is generally between CHF 75,000 and CHF 150,000.

Art. 4 Funded main applications

Support is provided for interdisciplinary cooperation in the preparation of main applications to national and international funding agencies that involve all the applicants. This applies in particular to:

- a* interdisciplinary project funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF);
- b* Synergy Grants from the European Research Council (ERC);
- c* applications for equivalent collaborative funding from national and international funding agencies (project funding, EU programs, foundations).

Art. 5 Prerequisites for application submissions, general conditions

¹ Research group leaders (including individual researchers) from all faculties and centers of the University of Bern, including researchers from the Inselspital and University Psychiatric Services (UPD), are eligible to apply.

² All applicants must be employed at the University of Bern, Inselspital or UPD for the duration of the main project and be eligible to submit the main application. The requirements of the planned main application apply. Assistant professors with tenure track are in any case eligible to submit an application.

³ The applicants appoint a coordinator who submits the application to the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation and ensures the reporting.

⁴ Applicants may not have already applied for an SNSF Sinergia in the same constellation in the last four years or have submitted a main application referred to in Art. 4.

⁵ The work financed with a "BIND Grant" must be carried by the infrastructure of the participating institutes or clinics (office, IT, etc.). There is no entitlement to additional support from the Executive Board of the University.

⁶ The main project must be based at the University of Bern, the Inselspital or the UPD.

⁷ The Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation may specify further stipulations and requirements in the call for proposals.

Art. 6 Interdisciplinary research

¹ Applicants for a "BIND Grant" come from at least two disciplines.

² The application shall state why the project is interdisciplinary within the context of Art. 2.

Art. 7 Intended use

¹ A "BIND Grant" is primarily intended to fund a scientifically active person who, under the guidance of all the participating applicants, carries out preliminary scientific work for the submission of a research proposal (main application).

² The "BIND Grant" contribution can be used for:

- a* Salary of one researcher (research assistant, scientific staff, postdoc or - in exceptional cases - a doctoral student) generally for up to 18 months (in exceptional cases up to a maximum of 24 months);
- b* Resources on a one-off or permanent basis for the use of Core Facilities, for consumables, and for small equipment that are primarily required for the preparation of the main application;
- c* Field and travel expenses incurred in connection with the preparation of the main application.

³ The transfer of funds to other external funding accounts (*Drittkredite*) or to the Inselspital or UPD is not sufficient proof of the compliant use of the funds.

Art. 8 Procedure

¹ The "BIND Grants" call for proposals is generally announced once a year by the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation. The call specifies the deadlines for application submission.

² The application for a "BIND Grant" has to be submitted to the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation. It provides the necessary forms or the online platform.

³ The Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation will only process applications that are submitted on time and are correct and complete in accordance with the requirements of these regulations and any further requirements of the call for proposals.

⁴ The Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation is responsible for organizing the call for proposals and the evaluation process for the applications submitted, for the financial processing of the approved applications and for monitoring the achievement of objectives.

Art. 9 Evaluation of the applications

¹ The Research Commission of the University of Bern reviews and scores the compliant applications submitted on time. It puts forward applications worthy of funding.

² The evaluation is based on the following criteria:

- a Interdisciplinarity of the "BIND Grant" project and the main project;
- b scientific quality of the project;
- c innovativeness of the project;
- d feasibility of the undertaking;
- e contribution of the "BIND Grant" to the acquisition of the main application.

The call for proposals specifies the minimum number of points that must be achieved in the interdisciplinarity criterion.

³ On the basis of the evaluation and funding recommendation of the Research Commission, the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation decides on the allocation of the contributions and informs the applicants of the result. The best-scored applications are supported within the limits of the available funds.

Art. 10 Obligations of the supported applicants

¹ If an application is approved, the coordinator sets up an external funding account (*Drittkredit*) with the institute or clinic. The Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation transfers the amount awarded to this account.

² All applicants are obliged to use the funds in accordance with the decision made regarding the application. Any unused funds have to be refunded to the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation.

³ If requested by the Research Commission with the recommendation for funding, applicants shall submit an interim report after one year. The Research Commission determines the format of the interim report (oral/written).

⁴ Upon completion of the project funded by a "BIND Grant", a report has to be submitted unprompted to the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation within two months. This report contains the following points:

- a financial report(s) of the *Drittkredite* (proof of use);
- b documentation of the scientific work (articles, papers, workshops, experiments, etc.);
- c information on any deviations between the application and the implementation;
- d an updated timetable for the submission of the main application;
- e statement on the usefulness of the "BIND Grant" with regard to the main application.

⁵ The Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation may request proof at any time that the funds have been used in accordance with the application and for the purposes defined in Art. 7.

⁶ Applicants undertake to submit a joint interdisciplinary application (main application) to a funding agency by the next possible submission deadline after completion of the "BIND Grant" (see Art. 4). If this is not possible, an extension can be requested from the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation.

⁷ The submission of the main application has to be documented to the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation unprompted.

⁸ If the project is not started within 12 months of the award, the funding decision expires. The funds have to be returned to the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation.

⁹ If the applicants do not submit a final report or do not submit the main application without justification, the Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation is authorized to reclaim all or part of the "BIND Grant" funds.

Art. 11 Reporting

The Vice-Rectorate Research and Innovation reports annually to the Executive Board of the University on the calls for proposals it has issued and the allocation of contributions. It publishes the list of awarded BIND Grants on its website.

Art. 12 Final provisions

These regulations were adopted by the Executive Board of the University on February 13, 2024 and enter into force immediately. They replace the regulations of July 31, 2015 concerning the support of interdisciplinarity grants at the University of Bern ("UniBE ID Grants").

Bern, 13. February 2024

On behalf of the Executive Board of the University
The Rector

Prof. Dr. C. Leumann