



## *Statutes*

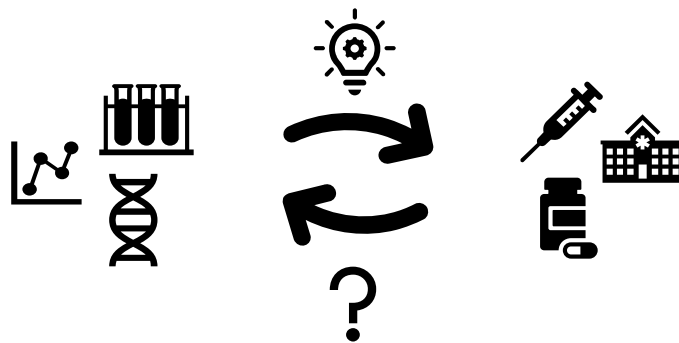
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*Postdoc programmes at the University Medical Centre*

*Oldenburg*

*Junior Clinician Scientist\*Clinician Scientist\*Medical Scientist*

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## **Preface**

*The Faculty VI of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Oldenburg was founded in 2012 and began operations with 40 first-year students in human medicine under the name European Medical School, EMS. Since then, the faculty has grown continuously and is gaining in importance as a research centre. Since 2023, Faculty VI has been known as UMO, University Medicine Oldenburg. In order to promote young scientists in a targeted manner, the expansion of the research-promoting framework conditions in the university hospitals is being vigorously pursued. This is also recommended by the German Council of Science and Humanities in its 2019 'Statement on the further development of University Medicine Oldenburg, taking into account the EMS'[1]. The development and establishment of funding programmes for clinician scientists is seen as an important building block here. The DFG Senate Commission for Clinical Research also recommends the establishment of structured junior researcher funding programmes [2, 3] in order to ensure the compatibility of research and clinical work during specialist training as well as efficient translational research and close integration of clinical and research [4]. The programmes are intended to create new opportunities to promote scientifically oriented career paths in medicine and ensure progress in translational research [4].*

*Consequently, Faculty VI of the University of Oldenburg is establishing a newly designed Junior Clinician Scientist Programme and a Clinician Scientist Programme for the winter semester 2023/2024. What the clinician scientist programmes have in common is that the programme participants complete an accompanying curriculum to further their scientific and professional training [4]. They are accompanied by two experienced mentors and supported in their project by a Clinician Scientist office. The Medical Faculty Association (MFT) has formulated minimum requirements for the design of Clinician Scientist programmes, which are taken into account in the Oldenburg programmes [5].*

*As medical research is also significantly driven by non-physician scientists, Faculty VI supplements the Clinician Scientist programmes with a Medical Scientist programme.*

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## 1. Target Groups

### *Junior Clinician Scientist*

The 12-month Junior Clinician Scientist Programme is aimed at licensed physicians in the early phase of specialist training (usually years 1-3) at an Oldenburg university hospital. Candidates can provide evidence of their scientific aptitude in the form of a doctorate completed with at least 'magna cum laude' or equivalent.

An employment relationship with the host university hospital must exist for the duration of the programme.

### *Clinician Scientist*

The 36-month Clinician Scientist Programme is aimed at licensed physicians in the advanced phase of specialist training (usually from year 4) as well as specialists at the Oldenburg University Hospitals who wish to habilitate. Applicants can provide evidence of their academic aptitude through a doctorate completed with at least 'magna cum laude' or a corresponding equivalent and, if possible, half of the number of publications specified in the habilitation regulations for the habilitation programme. An employment relationship with the host university hospital must exist for the duration of the programme.

### *Medical Scientist*

The 36-month Medical Scientist Programme is aimed at young scientists in medical and medical-related research who are already in the advanced postdoctoral phase, are habilitating and are not working as a doctor. Applicants can prove their scientific aptitude by having completed a doctorate with at least 'magna cum laude' or equivalent and, if possible, half the number of publications specified in the habilitation regulations for habilitation maturity. The programme does not provide funding for your own position.

## 2. Funding

### *Junior Clinician Scientist*

Junior Clinician Scientists receive a 20% position in accordance with TV-Ä (or a leave of absence and secondment of 20% as part of their medical activities for research and teaching). The maximum duration is 12 months. In addition, the recipients receive € 2,000 in material resources.

### *Clinician Scientist*

Clinician Scientists receive a 49% position according to TV-Ä for three years (or a 49% leave of absence and secondment as part of their medical activities for research and teaching). In addition, the clinician scientist receives € 10,000 in material resources per year.

### *Medical Scientists*

Medical Scientists receive personnel funds for three years to finance a doctoral student (65% TV-L 13) as part of a structured doctorate. In addition, medical scientists receive € 10,000 in material resources per year.

## 3. Programme goals

### *Junior Clinician Scientist*

Junior Clinician Scientists should complete their project, as outlined in the research proposal in the application, during the funding period. Participation in a publication is highly encouraged.

### *Clinician Scientist*

The aim of the Clinician Scientist Programme is a successful habilitation. In addition, further specialist training should be completed if necessary. The habilitation regulations of the University of Oldenburg must be observed in order to achieve the habilitation.

### *Medical Scientist*

The aim of the Medical Scientist Programme is the successful habilitation. The habilitation regulations of the University of Oldenburg must be met.

## 4. Programme elements

### 4.1 Mentoring

The recipients of all three programmes receive intensive professional support from two mentors for the entire duration of the programme. The mentors must come from two different departments. One of the two mentors must be habilitated. At least one of the two mentors must be a member of Faculty VI. The sponsored student and mentor sign a supervision agreement, which is binding for both parties but does not constitute an enforceable right. In order to ensure support for the research project and the protected, pre-defined research periods, the supervision agreement is also signed by the hospital management and the hospital board member or hospital management in the case of medically active mentors.

### 4.2 Reporting

The mentors conduct a target agreement meeting with their programme participants and progress reports every six or 12 months. These are small oral interim meetings to review progress in the programme. A record is kept, a copy of which is sent to the programme coordinator at the Faculty VI office by the grantees. In addition, the grantees submit an interim report after 24 months of the programme and a final report with programme evaluation after the end of the funding period.

### 4.3 Supporting curriculum

In addition to mentoring, the tailored accompanying curriculum is another core element of the early career support programmes. The DFG recommends attending courses from the following areas for structured further training as part of clinician scientist programmes [6]:

- Scientific training
- Medical training
- Key qualifications (transferable skills)

At least three one-day courses per funding year are mandatory for Clinician Scientists and Medical Scientists. The compulsory curriculum includes one course each on Good Scientific Practice (GWP),

Good Clinical Practice (GCP), statistics and ethics in medicine (continuing scientific education). The other courses can be chosen from a wide range offered by the OLTECH Graduate School, the Graduate Academy, the Medical and University Didactics Department at the University of Oldenburg and external course providers. In particular, there are courses in the area of academic continuing education and key qualifications (statistics, career planning, management). For further medical training, please refer to the programmes offered by hospitals, chambers and medical associations.

A plan for the completion of the accompanying curriculum is drawn up and submitted by the prospective grantees and their mentors together with the application documents. Deviations from the initial plan are possible and must be reported to the programme coordinator at the Faculty VI office. External courses must be checked by the programme coordinator and approved for the accompanying curriculum.

The supporting curriculum is optional for Junior Clinician Scientists.

Courses that have been completed up to three years before the start of the programme, for example as part of the doctorate, can be credited to the accompanying curriculum. It is recommended that you consult the programme coordinator.

#### 4.4 Presentation of research results and networking

The programme participants present their research results at the faculty's own EMS colloquium and at the Faculty VI Research Day. The programme coordinator organises regular retreats for the funded researchers. These take the form of workshops or mini-symposia and serve to promote reflection and networking among the programme participants. The thematic organisation is explicitly geared towards the needs of the programme participants.

#### 4.5 Publications in peer-reviewed journals

Clinicians and medical scientists must already provide evidence of their previous relevant publications in their application, which should correspond to around half of the publications required in the habilitation regulations. During the funding period, the programme participants should publish the other publications required for habilitation.

Junior Clinician Scientists should participate in at least one publication during the funding year.

#### 4.6 Teaching Duties

The sponsored persons fulfil a teaching obligation in accordance with LVVO.

### 5. Duties of the programme participants

Programme participants undertake to complete the programme elements listed under 4. to the best of their knowledge and belief. In addition, programme participants are obliged to use the planned protected research time for the research project outlined in the application and to spend the funds provided in accordance with the intended purpose. The rules on good scientific practice formulated by the DFG (DFG Code [7]) and the 'Regulations on the Principles for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg' [8] must be observed.

A breach of duty can lead to premature exclusion from the programme (see 11.)



## 6. Duties of the mentors and clinics

The mentors undertake to support the research project and all programme elements listed under 4. for the entire funding period. In addition to academic mentoring, this includes in particular support for the career planning of the programme participants. For clinician scientists, this also includes further medical training in the clinic. In particular, preferential allocation for rotations and interventions supports the clinician scientists in the possible recognition of research periods for the duration of specialist training by the Lower Saxony Medical Association. Communication with the latter is also part of the clinical mentor's remit.

The hospital management and the hospital board of directors or hospital management undertake to support the research project and the successful completion of all programme elements mentioned under 4. This applies in particular to the protected research periods and any preferential allocation for interventions and rotations as part of specialist training, as set out in the training regulations of the state of Lower Saxony [9]. The MFT has published a handout on recognising research periods as part of further training for clinician scientists [10].

Mentors, hospital management and hospital board members or hospital management also guarantee the provision of the necessary research infrastructure and an office workplace. The parties confirm this by signing the mentoring agreement.

## 7. Application and selection process

- Applicants can submit their complete application documents between 1 November and 28 February of each year as a single pdf file at [nachwuchsfoerderung.fkvi@uol.de](mailto:nachwuchsfoerderung.fkvi@uol.de). The application documents should
  - - a cover sheet
  - - a scientific curriculum vitae,
  - - a description of the research project including a timetable
  - - a list of the planned expenditure of material resources,
  - - the supervision agreement,
  - - a plan for attending the accompanying curriculum,
  - - a career plan,

- - if applying for the Clinician Scientist or Medical Scientist programme, also a plan for achieving a habilitation
- as well as
  - the degree,
  - the doctorate,
  - the employment contract with the host department or clinic
  - and, if applicable, the licence to practise medicine.
- For medical scientists, also an informal assurance from a mentor that the doctoral candidate will continue to receive qualified supervision within the department or clinic if the medical scientist leaves the doctoral programme prematurely (indication of a specific supervisor).

The programme coordinator at the Faculty VI office will carry out a preliminary review of the documents. Only complete application documents will be considered in the selection process.

The selection of funding recipients takes place in a two-stage process. In the first selection stage, each application is assessed by two internal or external reviewers using an evaluation form. The reviewers make a recommendation to the Commission for Academic Career Development of Faculty VI (hereinafter referred to as the Commission). The Commission decides which applicants will be invited to a second selection round. The selected candidates present and defend their research project to the Commission in the second selection stage. The committee draws up a list of potential funding recipients. The Dean's Office of Faculty VI then appoints the programme participants.

Selection criteria include previous academic achievements, career plan and concept for achieving a habilitation, the quality of the research project and, in the second selection round, the applicant's presentation. Women are favoured for funding if they are equally qualified.

## 8. Recruitment

The funding programmes are permanently advertised on the faculty's website.

Programme content and calls for applications are listed here.

In November of each year, calls for applications are sent to clinics and university mailing lists. The bi-annual faculty conferences are also used to draw attention to the current call for applications.

Information events on study and doctoral studies for Oldenburg students already draw attention to the programmes and provide information on the possibilities of academic career planning.

Events such as the faculty's own 'Research Day', clinic information days etc. should be used to advertise with information tables, displays and flyers. The programmes are also made visible to a broad public through the self-presentation of the funded researchers in the EMS colloquium or on the 'Research Day'.

## 9. Evaluation and quality management

In order to continuously improve the quality of the programmes, it is essential to evaluate the concepts. To this end, the funded projects are required to complete a questionnaire on the programme with their final reports. The main focus is on the achievement of objectives and compliance with the protected research periods in the medical programmes.

Results from regular network meetings of the MFT's Clinician Scientist working group are continuously incorporated into the further development and quality improvement measures of the local programmes. There is a close exchange with the programme coordinators at MHH and UMG in order to make resources usable across locations and to network the funded researchers with each other.

## 10. Sustainability and family compability

The funding programmes for postdocs are based on the University of Oldenburg's 'Strategy for the Promotion and Qualification of Doctoral Researchers' [11]. In addition, the postdoctoral programmes are embedded in the Faculty's funding concept for young scientists in medical and medical-related research, which offers a suitable qualification programme at every career level: from the longitudinal research curriculum (LFC, level 1) within the model degree programme in human medicine, to structured doctoral programmes (level 2), including a Dr. med. excellence programme to support students interested in research, to the Junior Clinician Scientist Programme (level 3). Together with the Medical Scientist Programme, the Clinician Scientist Programme forms the 4th funding level. Outside of the aforementioned funding programmes, established researchers can apply for funding in kind via the internal research pool, which also covers the further stages of the scientific/medical career path (4th/5th funding stage).

All programmes are integrated into the well-established structures for promoting early career researchers at the University of Oldenburg, such as the Graduate School of Natural Sciences, Medicine and Technology (OLTECH), the Graduate Academy and the University Didactics and Medical Didactics.

These institutions provide a comprehensive range of specialist and interdisciplinary qualification programmes, which include individual courses as well as coaching and mentoring programmes for the various target groups. The faculty's early career researchers can also take advantage of the wide range of programmes offered by the Joint Research Academy of the Cluster of Excellence 'Hearing4all', of which the faculty is the spokesperson.

With the continuous expansion of the postdoctoral programmes, not only the corresponding DFG recommendations, but also the recommendations made by the German Council of Science and Humanities in 2019 on the occasion of the evaluation of the faculty are being consistently implemented.

In order to bundle the coordination of the programmes and drive the expansion forward, a permanent position for the promotion of early career researchers in medicine has been established at the Faculty from 2022. The position is part of the Junior Researcher Development and International Affairs team, which has two additional permanent FTEs and is responsible for the Faculty's other career development activities, among other things.

All of the above-mentioned measures and structures are designed to be permanent and therefore sustainable.

A key aim of the postdoctoral programmes is to ensure fair gender representation and family compatibility. The programmes can be completed on a part-time basis.

## 11. Premature exclusion from the programme

The funded researchers sign a supervision agreement with their mentors and, if applicable, the clinic management and the hospital board or hospital management, which also contains the allocation and scope of the protected research time. Attached to this supervision agreement is the document 'Programme Elements Postdoc Programmes of the University Medical Centre Oldenburg', which informs all parties involved about the programme elements such as the accompanying curriculum, teaching obligations, participation in events and regular reporting. By commencing the programmes, the recipients undertake to comply with the obligations set out in these documents. Failure to do so may lead to premature exclusion from the programme.

Any violation of the rules of good scientific practice formulated by the DFG (DFG Code [7]) and the 'Regulations on the Principles for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg' [8] may also lead to exclusion from the programme.

## 12. Organisation

The Dean's Office and the Commission for Academic Career Development of Faculty VI are responsible for the design and further development of the programmes. The Vice Dean for Academic Career Development heads the committee and is also responsible for programme management. Academic programme coordination and administration is carried out by the Head of Junior Researcher Support in Medicine at the Faculty VI office.

Programme management and scientific programme coordination and administration together make up the Clinician Scientist office. In the future, the establishment of a Clinician Scientist Board could be discussed, as outlined in the handout for MFT members on the recognition of research time in continuing education [10].

## 13. Financing der Programme

The Junior Clinician Scientist, Clinician Scientist and Medical Scientist programmes are funded intramurally by Faculty VI. Increasing programme capacities by acquiring third-party funding (DFG, EKFS etc.) is a declared aim of the Faculty.

## Literature and explanatory notes

Please note, that mentioned links often are available in German only.

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