University Research Priority Programs (URPP): Third Call 2019

1. Summary

University Research Priority Programs (URPP) serve as a strategic instrument of the Executive Board of the University to sharpen UZH’s profile. The instrument aims to promote and interconnect selected research areas within the University based on existing scientific excellence, as well as to strengthen the academic career development in the respective areas. For a limited period of time, the Executive Board promotes strategically important research areas in order to stimulate sustainable development in relevant areas for society. With the funds available, 4 to 6 new URPPs can be launched.

The call is thematically open.

The submission procedure has a two-stage structure (outline proposals, full proposals).

Timetable:
Call: December 2018 / January 2019
Submission deadline outline proposals: 4 June 2019
Submission deadline full proposals: 10 March 2020
Project start: 1 January 2021

2. Principles and requirements for URPPs

A URPP conducts outstanding interdisciplinary research. It builds on existing excellence in research and teaching. A URPP has its own profile and strategic objectives. It is interdisciplinary and multi-faculty. Existing structures will be further strengthened and expanded during the term of the URPP. A URPP attaches particular importance to the promotion of academic career development and pays particular attention to the promotion of young women (in accordance with the UZH Gender Policy Code of Conduct). The establishment of assistant professorships (internally or externally funded, especially with tenure track) is desirable.

The present call for proposals is thematically open.

A URPP is regularly evaluated by a scientific panel (every 4 years). It is administratively assigned to a faculty.

2.1 Coherence of the project, added value and high risk research

The research program must be coherent and have a scientific added value compared to the implementation of individual projects. A URPP is interdisciplinary and multi-faculty and has a broad thematic scope.

A URPP carries out high risk research in at least one sub-project. High risk research refers to projects that have a high scientific potential but are too new, cover too wide a range of disciplines or are at a too early stage to be funded through the traditional peer review process.

2.2 Time and financial scope

The total duration of a URPP is a maximum of 12 years. Depending on the research focus, the URPP models can be 4+4 years or 4+4+4 years. The chosen model must be indicated in the proposal.

The financial scope depends on the research projects of the individual URPP and takes into account the needs of the respective research areas. For the first financing phase 2021-2024, the Executive
Board of the University expects to support max. 1-2 million CHF per URPP per year. The financing model foresees funding 50% of the budget for the first phase (2021-2024), 100% for the second phase (2025-2028) and 50% for any third phase (2029-32). With the funds available for this call, 4 to 6 new URPPs can be supported.

### 2.3 Requirements for the URPP management

The directors of a URPP have a first-class scientific record and are internationally recognised in their field of research. They are able to coordinate and manage a larger research network. They are permanently employed at the University of Zurich.

The directors agree to lead the URPP at minimum during the first phase (4 years). For a planned future change of management, reasons should already be given when the application is submitted. A planned co-leadership must also be justified.

It is possible to apply for personnel support to coordinate the URPP (50-80% WMA). This does not relieve the directors from teaching duties.

### 2.4 Organizational structure

In order to ensure smooth operation, an organizational structure adapted to the respective environment must be defined. The URPP are free to design these structures within the framework of the applicable university regulations.

### 2.5 Equal opportunities

The governance structure of a URPP should reflect the gender distribution in the student populations of the participating disciplines. An equal distribution of the sexes in the case of co-leadership and in the management of the sub-projects is desirable.

### 3. Submission procedure

The submission procedure has a two-stage structure (outline proposals, full proposals).

The outline or full proposals must comply with the specifications given by the Executive Board of the University and must be submitted in full and on time by the designated director to the division Research Development. Outline or full proposals that are incomplete, exceeding page limits, or not submitted on time will not be considered.
3.1 Submission of outline proposals

The outline proposal comprises a maximum of five pages (excl. title page and appendices), is written in English and structured as follows:

1. URPP title, information on the URPP management and the mainly involved faculties (title page)
2. Short description of the planned research program, including description of high risk projects (3 pages)
3. Expected added value and innovation potential gained through interdisciplinary cooperation compared to the sum of the individual projects (0.5 pages)
4. Significance of the URPP for the University of Zurich (0.5 pages)
5. Goals and measures in the field of academic career development and gender equality (0.5 pages)
6. Persons involved (intended URPP directors, sub-project leaders) (0.5 pages)
7. Appendices:
   a. Budget (according to template)
   b. CVs and publication lists of the persons involved (intended URPP directors, sub-project leaders) (2 pages per person, 1 page CV + 1 page with 5 most important publications of the last 10 years and a URL to a complete publication list (ORCID, Scholar, Scopus, ZORA, etc.))
   c. 2 slides (PowerPoint) with the most important information on the planned URPP (title, research project, persons involved)
   d. Suggestions for at least five external reviewers (according to template)

The outline proposal must be prepared according to the official templates (URPP_OP_template.docx and URPP_OP_budget.xlsx at https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/researchinnovation/priorityprograms/university/call.html).

The outline proposal (incl. appendices) must be submitted as a PDF document to the division Research Development (maurus.bolfing@uzh.ch) by 4 June 2019, 18:00 hrs CEST.

3.2 Submission of full proposals

The full proposal comprises a maximum of 15 pages (excl. title page and appendices), is written in English and structured as follows:

1. URPP title, information on the URPP management and the mainly involved faculties (title page)
2. Summary of the planned research program (1 page)
3. Scientific question and state of research (2 pages)
4. Research plan for four years and perspective for the following years, incl. description of high risk projects (7 pages)
5. Expected added value and innovation potential gained through interdisciplinary cooperation compared to the sum of the individual projects (1 page)
6. Use of existing or new research infrastructures (1 page)
7. Significance of the URPP for the University of Zurich (1 page)
8. Goals and measures in the field of academic career development and gender equality (1 page)
9. Organisation of the URPP: persons involved (management; sub-project leaders), tasks and responsibilities, organisation chart (1 page)
10. Appendices:
   a) Budget (according to template)
   b) CVs and publication lists of the persons involved (intended URPP directors, sub-project leaders) (2 pages per person, 1 page CV + 1 page with 5 most important publications of the last 10 years and a URL to a complete publication list (ORCID, Scholar, Scopus, ZORA, etc.))
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- 5 slides (PowerPoint) with the most important information on the planned URPP (title, research project, persons involved)
- Open science data management plan (according to template)
- Declaration on parallel applications for funding of the project or substantial sub-projects (according to template)
- Suggestions for at least five external reviewers, incl. negative list (max. two persons) (according to template)
- Signed letter of support from the main faculties involved

The full proposal must be prepared according to the official templates (URPP_FP_template.docx, URPP_FP_budget.xlsx, URPP_FP_open_science.docx, URPP_FP_applications.docx and URPP_FP_reviewers.docx at https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/researchinnovation/priorityprograms/university/call.html).

The full proposal (incl. appendices) must be submitted as a PDF document to the division Research Development (maurus.bolfing@uzh.ch) by 10 March 2020, 18:00 hrs CEST.

4. Selection procedure

4.1 Evaluation of outline proposals

The following criteria shall be applied when evaluating the outline proposals:

- Potential and significance of the research topic for the University of Zurich
- Scientific excellence, originality and innovation potential (high risk)
- Added value of interdisciplinary collaboration
- Consistency with the strategic planning of the faculty and the university
- Reputation and academic record of the participating researchers
- Plausibility of goals and measures in the area of academic career development and gender equality

Evaluation by the Faculty Management

The Faculty Management evaluates the received outline proposals according to the criteria mentioned above. The Leading House procedure is applied: the outline proposals are only evaluated by the main faculty involved.

Workshop Executive Board of the University and Deans

The deans present the projects of their faculties and the results of their evaluation to the Executive Board of the University.

Evaluation by the expert committee of the Executive Board of the University

A preliminary expert committee of the Executive Board of the University prepares a proposal for the attention of the Executive Board on the basis of the submitted outline proposals and the evaluation by the Faculty Managements. The preliminary expert committee is appointed by the Executive Board of the University.

Decision by the Executive Board of the University

The Executive Board of the University decides which projects will be invited to submit a full proposal. The decision is based on the evaluation by the Faculty Managements, the proposal of the expert committee, and on considerations of strategy and research policy. Applicants will be informed in writing of the Executive Board's decision in November / December 2019.
4.2 Evaluation of full proposals

The following criteria shall be applied when evaluating the full proposals:

a) Potential and significance of the research topic for the University of Zurich
b) Scientific excellence, originality and innovation potential (high risk)
c) Added value of interdisciplinary collaboration
d) Consistency with the strategic planning of the faculty and the university
e) Reputation and academic record of the participating researchers
f) Synergies with research infrastructures (existing or under development)
g) Plausibility of goals and measures in the area of academic career development and gender equality

Evaluation by external experts

Full proposals are subject to in-depth scientific evaluation by external experts. For each proposal, at least two external reviews are prepared for the attention of the Executive Board of the University.

The external reviewers are selected by the Executive Board of the University on the basis of the suggestions submitted by the applicants and by the expert committee. The external experts only evaluate the applications received. For the evaluation of the funded URPPs, new committees will be set up.

Evaluation by internal panel of experts

An internal panel of experts evaluates the full proposals taking note of the external reports and invites the applicants to a presentation in May 2020. On the basis of the submitted full proposals, the external reports and the presentations of the applicants, the internal panel of experts submits a recommendation to the Executive Board of the University.

The internal panel of experts consists of excellent scientists with experience in interdisciplinary collaborative projects. The experts are selected by the Executive Board of the University. In the event of conflicts of interest, the regulations customary in the UZH are applied.

Decision by the Executive Board of the University

The Executive Board of the University will decide on the approval of the new URPPs on the basis of the external reports, the recommendations of the internal panel of experts, the statements of the faculties and considerations of strategy and research policy. It is expected that the applicants will be informed of the results in writing in July 2020.

5. Start of the URPP

After an application has been approved, the URPP management submits a revised project plan including a detailed financial plan for the first four years. On this basis, a target agreement is concluded between the URPP and the Vice President for Research for the first four years.

The new URPPs will start on 1 January 2021.