

Top Vet Science Call 2020

Top Vet Science is an internal University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna sponsorship programme (administered by the WWTF GmbH).

The call is open for project proposals:

- that link excellent basic research and veterinary medical applications,
- at the interface of research fields, using overlapping methods, theories and applications, and applying complementary approaches,
- that are hypothesis-driven and will lead to better treatment, diagnosis and/or prevention of animal diseases.

Application procedure:

- Principal Investigators (PIs) may submit applications online at **vetfunding.wwtf.at**
- The submission deadline is the **31st of August 2020, at 2pm.**
- Hearings will be held in **spring 2021**, after which a decision is expected.
- A maximum of two projects will be funded.

Support:

- Project teams are headed by two PIs: a clinical researcher and a non-clinical researcher.
- Each grant will cover the salaries of two PhD students. At least one of the two PhD students must be a veterinarian.
- If the PIs do not hold positions at the Vetmeduni Vienna or are not employed for the duration of the project, their salaries will be covered by the grant.
- If the clinical researcher has a permanent position at the Vetmeduni Vienna, the clinic may hire clinical staff to cover the time he/she would normally spend on clinical duties (percentage of clinical duties) to allow time for research (“off-clinic” time).
- An annual bench fee of €15,000 per person will also be paid.
- Additionally, up to €35,000 per project may be requested annually for special equipment, animal costs, and internal and external services.
- Projects will have a 4-year duration.



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Roles and eligibility criteria:

- PIs:
 - The clinical researcher PI and the non-clinical researcher PI develop and lead the project together.
 - Both PIs should have a doctoral degree, obtained no longer than 15 years ago (excluding career breaks from academic research, such as parental leave, employment periods outside research), and should have an excellent scientific track-record for their academic age.
 - For the duration of the project, one of the PIs must be employed in a non-clinical institute, the other in a clinical unit.
 - The clinical researcher PI should be a board-certified or board-eligible veterinarian.
 - The clinical researcher PI must dedicate at least 70% of his/her time to research in close interaction with the non-clinical research institute.
 - The non-clinical researcher PI should have at least two years postdoctoral experience, proven leadership skills and independent research activities, as well as experience in the (co-)supervision of PhD students.
 - Individual PIs may not be involved in more than one proposal.
- Mentors:
 - Mentors act as sponsors of the PIs, supporting them with the application and throughout the project.
 - Mentors confirm the availability of the necessary resources and infrastructure.
 - One of the mentors must work in a non-clinical institute, the other in a clinical unit.
 - Mentors should be authorized to supervise PhD students.
 - Mentors should have a group leader position or higher.
 - Mentors should be accomplished researchers with an outstanding publication record in international peer-reviewed journals.
 - A mentor may be involved in up to two proposals, only one of which may be funded.

Assessment criteria:

- Fit to the scope of the call
- Excellence and innovativeness of the proposed research
- Hypothesis-driven
- Robust methodology and experimental design
- Feasibility (including an adequate risk and mitigation strategy)
- Clinical applicability and scientific impact
- Sound data management plan and dissemination strategy
- Justified budget, time, and resource allocation
- Collaborative aspects and interdisciplinarity
- Gender balance
- Experience and track-record of the applicants
- Career development prospects and potential to secure additional funding
- Support and resources from mentors and institute/clinic

Evaluation process:

- Submitted proposals will undergo a formal eligibility check.
- Proposals will be evaluated by at least three external peer reviewers.
- A panel of international experts will assess the proposals and the reviews to decide which PIs will be invited to the hearing.
- PIs invited to the hearing will give a 15-minute presentation followed by a 15-minute Q&A session with the panel.