ERS Forum
Kármán Conferences
Guidelines for Chairs
Kármán Conferences
A measure within the framework of the Universities of Excellence funding line

Outstanding international meetings on novel research topics can be promoted as “Kármán Conferences”. Kármán Conferences help to develop interdisciplinary topics at RWTH Aachen University and position them in a competitive international environment. They serve to promote topics from fundamental research and technology.

Proposals from emerging research fields that are expected to have a high impact on RWTH’s future scientific profile are given priority support. Interdisciplinary topics at the interfaces of natural, engineering or medical sciences, but also humanities and economics are predestined for hosting a Kármán Conference. This is an open call, the submission of a proposal is possible at any time.

Application Process

1. Before Submission: Preselection
   Contact Division 4.1
   Any full professor of RWTH Aachen University may apply for a subsidy to organize a Kármán Conference. The proposal has to be submitted by the conference chair together with a vice chair person from a different faculty of RWTH. You can find more information about preselection on the next page.

2. Submission of the Proposal
   Information on the recommended structure of the application can be found on the next page.

3. Review by the ERS Steering Committee
   Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
   - Originality of scientific topic
   - Interdisciplinary nature
   - Scientific excellence of invited speakers and overall programme
   - Contribution to research profile and international visibility of RWTH
   - Possible benefit to establish a novel, promising research topic at RWTH
   - Conference format (does the planned format stimulate open exchange on new, not yet published research topics?)
   - Scientific reputation of the applicant
   - Application volume (is the budget plan feasible? Is the requested funding amount well justified and reasonable?)

4. Approval of proposal

5. Joint planning
   Div. 4.1 not only provides financial support, but is also happy to offer organisational help by arrangement.

6. Conference

Measure 3:
„Internationalize Frontier Research“

To promote and discuss frontier research topics at the interfaces of different disciplines on an international top-level, Kármán Research Conferences were established within the Institutional Strategy and will be continued. “
Preselection

The following statements should help you to decide whether the intended conference is suitable to be supported as a Kármán Conference.

1. Meetings within a series of conferences cannot be supported, as an already established line of regular meetings is contradictory to the concept of a Kármán Conference.

2. Kármán Conferences are a “working meeting” of a confined invited scientific community (70-100 participants) and do not aim at creating international visibility for a topic rather established, already.

3. Documentation and publication of the conference contributions is not recommended in order to foster a trusting atmosphere and open discussion of yet unpublished results from cutting-edge research.

4. Kármán Conferences follow the concept of the Gordon Research Conference Series. If you did not yet participate in a Gordon Research Conference yourself, please refer to the website to better understand the concept of the Kármán Conference: www.grc.org

Proposed Structure of the Proposal

Conference Title
Conference Date and Venue (if already known)
Chair Person (applicant) & Co-Chair (from a different faculty)

Topic of the Conference
Description of the conference theme and its relevance to the respective scientific community: is it a novel, exciting topic; have others published results in this area already; does the conference make a straightforward extension or a significant step forward? Interdisciplinarity of the scientific topic: does the topic requires the participation of at least two different disciplines; is there a research aspect for any discipline involved; are the conference contributions of each discipline ahead of the state of the art?

Impact on Research Profile of RWTH Aachen University
Contribution and expected long-term impact on the research profile and international visibility of RWTH.

Conference Program
Preliminary programme including preliminary list of keynote speakers; are the invited speakers internationally acknowledged experts; is the list of speakers and expected participants suitable to discuss the conference topic at an internationally outstanding scientific level? Further details to guarantee a successful meeting (meeting schedule, conference venue, number of participants, integration of young scientists, …)

Cost Frame
The total cost plan shall list all expected income (including the calculation of participant fees) and expenses and justify the requested grant. Estimated costs of the entire conference organisation, sum of requested funds, possible co-financing.
Timeline of tasks
In months before the start of the planned conference

Submission of the proposal to the Div. 4.1
- Informal application by e-mail is sufficient
- Application possible at any time = Open Call

Start of conference planning
- First creative meeting with Division 4.1 to plan and organise the conference (who will do what? where? event technology? framework programme? ...)
- Naming of sessions and contents
- Contacting potential speakers and discussion leaders

Editing the preliminary programme

Finalisation of preliminary programme
- Confirmed speakers are included in the agenda
- Sessions should include headings

Save The Date
- by email to the selected group of participants
- on the website

Invitations to the selected group:
1. Submission of Abstracts - Postersession
2. Application to participate in the conference

Developing the preliminary draft programme into a detailed final programme

Applications and Postersessions
- Organisation of poster session, selection of poster contributions
- Review of applications received for participation in the conference

Programme/Arrangements
- The programme is final, Postersession included
- All speakers, discussion leaders and session chairs have been determined.
- Arrangements with the conference organisation and technology

Registration deadline
- The list of participants is final

Adjustments/Arrangements
- Possibly updating the programme
- Preparation for the role as conference (or vice-) chair
- Arrangements with all parties involved (vice chair, discussion leaders, conference organisers etc.)

Conference
The budget of ERS is provided by the excellence initiative of the German federal and state governments. For the organization of a Kármán Conference, an ERS subsidy of up to 25,000 € per conference may be requested. Up to two meetings per year will be supported.

The ExU funds serve as an instrument to attract first-class speakers and discussion leaders and to support the diversity of participants, especially the participation of young scientists.

Eligible costs are, e.g., rent for meeting venues, technical equipment, external moderation, travel costs for invited speakers, session chairs and selected attendees.

In addition, co-financing of the conference should be sought from other financial components such as funding from the DFG, DAAD, etc., as well as through the acquisition of sponsorships or donations. The collection of participant fees to cover accommodation costs, among other things, is also a possibility.
Speakers and Discussion Leaders

Who to Invite?

Speakers are expected to be
• international leaders of their respective field
• be able to inspire and convey enthusiasm for their research topic

The overall selection of presenters should ensure that
• different fields are involved, with the aim of increasing interdisciplinarity and increase the diversity of disciplines
• the programme differs from conferences already held
• gender equity is given
• both established scientists and young talents participate
• depending on the topic and relevance, speakers from industry, administration and the public may be involved

It is optimal if the presenters
• stay the entire length of the conference
• are open to discuss his/her work
• approachable to junior scientists

Programme structure

Ideally some invited key note speakers give speeches to initiate discussions on which the actual focus of the conference lies. Sufficient time should be planned for informal networking (e.g. joint leisure activities in the afternoon). A possible social programme also serves to promote personal exchange.

Sample Agenda for one Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:45</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>Speaker 1 &amp; Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Speaker 2 &amp; Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Speaker 3 &amp; Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Coffeebreak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Speaker 4 &amp; Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Panel discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>Social Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>Poster Session / Speed Talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:00</td>
<td>A cozy end to the day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building the Programme

Tips & Advice

• Plan generous times for discussion after presentations (at least 20 minutes lecture and 10 minutes discussion).
• Plan formats and measures for the promotion of female scientists, e.g. Discussion forum, mentoring offer, ...
• Include outstanding young talents in the programme through „short talks“ based on the submitted poster abstracts.

Preliminary Programme
It should consist of the following components

• Subtitle of the conference
• Description of the conference
• Titles of the sessions
• Names of invited speakers and key speakers

Further Hints:

• Conference Chairs should avoid being a speaker at their own conference.
• Avoid using chair and vice-chair as discussion leaders.
• If speakers are used as discussion leaders, it should only be when they themselves are not providing content at the session
• The preliminary programme should only be published once all speakers have confirmed their attendance (in exceptional cases, the addition „requested“ is sufficient).

Full Programme
The final programme builds on the preliminary one and additionally contains the following information:

• Title of each talk
• Length of discussion time after each speaker
• Additional speakers and discussion leaders, if required
• Placeholder elements for presentations selected from posters or abstracts, if applicable
• Break times and social programme
Promoting the Conference

It is recommended to announce the conference to the circle of participants as early as possible, even if the programme content is still vague.

Support by Devision 4.1

- Invitations to e-mail distribution lists of the Chair
- Mailing to RWTH distribution list (internal)
- Reporting to press portals
- Establish media partnerships to place ads in scientific journals free of charge
- Use of the social media channel of the profile areas and/or RWTH Aachen University
- Development or maintenance of a web presence (either hosted on the RWTH Aachen University site or an independent one)

What Chairs can do

- Provide email distribution lists for sending invitation mailings
- Provide images for promotion activities (flyers, websites, social media posts ...)
- Send interesting posts for the social media channel
- Create a link in your own signature to the event website
- Show a slide with the key facts of the conference at meetings
- Personally address contacts from your professional (specialist) environment (mouth to mouth propaganda)
RWTH Aachen University
Division 4.1 - Research Profile and Intellectual Property Management

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