

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

# Fellowships in the ZiF Group on “Practices of Interdisciplinary Research”

October 2028 – March 2029

**Deadline for Application: 9 February 2027 (midnight CET)**

Since its founding, the Center for Interdisciplinary Research (Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung, ZiF), Bielefeld University's Institute for Advanced Study, has fostered collaboration among researchers from different disciplines within thematically focused research groups. On the occasion of its 60th anniversary in 2028, ZiF will turn its attention to its own institutional mission by making interdisciplinarity the object of systematic scholarly reflection – and by curating a collaborative group of fellows on this topic.

ZiF welcomes applications for individual fellowships from researchers across various disciplinary backgrounds whose work centers on the theory and practice of interdisciplinary research. Fellows will spend six months in residence at ZiF, pursuing their individual research projects while also engaging in intensive intellectual exchange with other fellows who are part of this Interdisciplinarity Group as well as with colleagues from Bielefeld University. ZiF will provide a stimulating interdisciplinary environment and organise formats for discussion and collaboration.

With this group, ZiF aims to advance outstanding research on the practices, conditions, and epistemic foundations of interdisciplinary research. At the same time, it seeks to translate theoretical insights into practical approaches for fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, including the development of concepts, methods, and institutional support structures that can strengthen interdisciplinary research at ZiF and beyond.

### Thematic Focus

The group approaches interdisciplinarity not only as a mode of organising research, but also as an important object of scholarly inquiry. It seeks to advance a deeper understanding of the epistemic, cognitive, social, and institutional practices through which interdisciplinary research is conducted and interdisciplinary knowledge is produced. The group aims to bring together researchers who study these practices from diverse disciplinary perspectives and methodological traditions, while engaging in a shared conversation about the forms, conditions, dynamics, and outcomes of interdisciplinary collaboration from a reflective perspective.

Possible research questions include, but are not limited to:

- How is interdisciplinary research organised and practised in different institutional settings?
- What epistemic, methodological, cognitive, and social processes shape interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge production?

- How are concepts, methods, data, models, and other forms of knowledge integrated across disciplinary boundaries?
- How do interdisciplinary teams communicate, coordinate their work, negotiate differences, and develop shared understandings?
- How can reflective knowledge about interdisciplinary research inform the design of concepts, methods, training formats, and institutional structures that strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration?

The call welcomes theoretical, conceptual, empirical, historical, and mixed-methods approaches. We welcome proposals from scholars working in disciplines that explicitly study science and scientific practice, such as philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, science and technology studies, higher education research, and organisational studies, as well as from researchers in other disciplines whose projects adopt a clearly articulated reflective perspective on interdisciplinary research.

## Group Structure

The Interdisciplinarity Group is convened by ZiF and has the following key features:

- Group size: eight to ten fellows (with residential fellowships of six months)
- Timing: 1 October 2028 – 31 March 2029
- Composition: fellows from a diverse range of disciplines
- Kick-off workshop: ZiF will organise a kick-off workshop for successful candidates from 13 to 17 March 2028 for all group members to meet and get to know each other, establish initial modes of collaboration, clarify shared expectations and goals, and lay the groundwork for the residency. On-site participation in this workshop is mandatory. ZiF will cover travel and accommodation to enable on-site participation.
- Residency format: This is not a fellowship to merely conduct an individual research project, but is characterised by a combination of independent research and structured collaborative activities throughout the residency. The readiness to engage in these activities is a significant prerequisite.

## What ZiF offers

- A six-month fellowship (October 2028 to March 2029) in an inspiring interdisciplinary environment
- Buy-out options: ZiF offers various buy-out options (e.g. funding for teaching replacement) to enable participation in the group; alternatively, allowances are available to support your stay in Bielefeld.
- Travel expenses: reimbursement of travel costs to and from Bielefeld
- Accommodation: housing on the ZiF campus (subject to availability) or an alternative in Bielefeld at no additional cost
- Workshop support: funding and organisational support for convening international research workshops during the residency in collaboration with other members of the Interdisciplinarity Group; the details will be fixed during the kick-off workshop.
- Support for accompanying family members

## What ZiF expects

We are seeking researchers who:

- propose an independent, reflective research project on the practices of interdisciplinary research;
- are interested in intensive interdisciplinary exchange with others;
- are willing to actively participate in cooperative work phases;
- are willing to contribute to the development of concepts, methods, and institutional support structures that can strengthen interdisciplinary research at ZiF and beyond.

The formal requirements for an application are:

- a doctoral degree,
- an affiliation with a university or research institute (especially for the duration of the fellowship),
- confirmation from the home institution that leave will be granted (from October 2028 until March 2029) if the fellowship is awarded.

## How to apply?

To be considered, applications must include the following:

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|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cover sheet                                          | name, affiliation, discipline, contact (email address, physical address)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Summary of the project                               | up to 1,500 char., incl. spaces, approx. half a page                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Project outline                                      | no more than 12,000 char. incl. spaces (approx. four pages, please insert page numbers), plus reference list                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| CV                                                   | max. four pages incl. relevant publications and other additional information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Motivation letter                                    | reasons for joining the Interdisciplinarity Group (no more than 6,000 char. incl. spaces; approx. two pages)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Brief responses to all of the questions on the right | (6,000 char. incl. spaces, evenly distributed across all questions; approx. two pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Reflection: What does reflection on interdisciplinary research mean to you, and how do you implement a reflective approach in your research?</li> <li>→ Collaboration: How do you envision collaborating with other fellows of the group in ways that enrich your project? What forms of exchange or collaboration do you find productive and what would you like to try out during your stay at ZiF?</li> <li>→ Support: What forms of support from ZiF do you need to participate most productively in the Interdisciplinarity Group?</li> <li>→ Workshop participants/collaborators: Name 2-3 scholars whose input would be particularly relevant for your proposed research</li> </ul> |

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|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | project – who are they/what is their disciplinary background?<br>Please briefly explain your selection.                                                                                                                                                    |
| Formal requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a doctoral degree</li> <li>• an affiliation with a university or research institute (especially for the duration of the fellowship)</li> <li>• confirmation from the home institution of granted leave</li> </ul> |

Please submit your application as a single PDF file via the [online application platform](#). Please note: Applications that do not meet the formal requirements or adhere to the formal submission procedure cannot be considered.

## Selection Process and Criteria

The selection process involves a committee appointed by ZiF. Applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Scholarly quality of the proposed research project
- Originality of the project
- Relevance of the project to the thematic focus of the Interdisciplinarity Group (i.e., practices of interdisciplinary research, reflective approach)
- Previous research on interdisciplinarity and related topics
- Demonstrated engagement with reflective approaches (at least one relevant publication plus further evidence of engagement with reflective approaches, e.g. conference presentation, project contribution, or comparable output)
- Experience of and openness to interdisciplinary collaboration

Following a selection based on the written applications, shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview.

## Timeline

- Application deadline: 9 February 2027
- Interviews: June 2027
- Final decisions on the fellowships: July 2027
- Kick-off workshop (on-site attendance required): 13-17 March 2028
- Start of the residency: 1 October 2028

### For content-related questions:

Prof. Dr. Marie I. Kaiser  
[Kaiser.m@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:Kaiser.m@uni-bielefeld.de)

### For organisational matters:

Dr. Daniela Noll-Opitz & Dr. Nadine Suttmöller  
[zif-proposalsupport@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:zif-proposalsupport@uni-bielefeld.de)

**Please address your application to:** Executive Director Prof. Dr. Eleonora Rohland  
Upload your application in ONE PDF FILE (all materials listed above) [here](#).