

### Call for Applications

# Theme Week on Ethics of Science: Ethical Dimensions of AI Research and AI in Research

**Date: August 07-09, 2024**

**Deadline:** December 05, 2023, 02:00 PM CET

In its "Theme Weeks", the Volkswagen Foundation funds scientific symposia on various predetermined topics. The symposia are carried out in the same week at the Xplanatorium Schloss Herrenhausen conference center in Hanover and accompanied by a supporting program organized by the Foundation.



Humanities and social sciences



Organization of a scientific symposium



Researchers at German universities and research institutions, optionally international co-applicants

# 1 Objectives

Current progress in the development of artificial intelligence models is rapid and presents re- search with the challenge of making meaningful use of the great potential of artificial intelligence without ignoring the associated difficulties. For the scientific community, this raises the question of the "right" way to proceed, both in research on artificial intelligence and in the use of artificial intelligence in research in general.

Since this question of what is ethically appropriate within the bounds of what is scientifically possible is one of the core issues of ethics of science, the Volkswagen Foundation is hosting a "Theme Week on Ethics of Science: Ethical Dimensions of AI Research and AI in Research" from August 07-09, 2024. It invites applications for scientific symposia that address the nexus of artificial intelligence and scientific research from an ethical perspective. The symposia should be clearly focused and generally correspond to one of the following areas:

1. Ethical aspects of artificial intelligence research.
2. Ethical aspects of the use of artificial intelligence in research.

Beyond this basic orientation, the questions to be addressed can be chosen freely. An involve- ment of non-scientific actors in the planned events is possible, as is the joint development of a position paper/white paper as part of the program. The aim of the Volkswagen Foundation is to fund up to four symposia, which will be held with at the Xplanatorium Schloss Herrenhausen conference center in Hanover, with an accompanying program organized by the Foundation. In addition to facilitating scientific exchange, the Foundation thereby intends to contribute to net- working of the scientific community.

## 2 Scope of Funding

Symposia funded by the Foundation take place at the conference center Xplanatorium Herrenhausen Palace, Hannover, within the framework of the Volkswagen Foundation's "Theme Weeks". The venue offers meeting and conference rooms of different sizes, together with a professional organizational as well as technical infrastructure. In addition to the provision of this infrastructure and handling of organizational tasks, symposia are supported with funds covering personnel as well as non-personnel or publication costs. Support can be made available for events with usually up to 50 participants.

Funds may be requested to cover the following costs:

### Personnel costs

- Funds for student assistants during preparation, running and follow-up of the event in an amount not exceeding 7,000 EUR.

### Travel costs

- Expenses for accommodation for all participants (please estimate 140 EUR per night/person).
- Travel expenses for all participants. Please also refer to the Volkswagen Foundation's Recommendations for sustainable traveling (see section 6). Please estimate the following sums per participant in the cost plan for travel to and from the event in total (please note that only costs actually incurred can be settled with the Foundation after the event):
  - Participants from Germany: 250 EUR
  - Participants from the rest of Europe: 500 EUR
  - Participants from the east coast of the USA: 1,000 EUR
  - Participants from the rest of the world: 1,500 EUR

### Non-personnel costs, e.g.

- Expense allowances for freelancers (e.g. journalists or moderators), who are actively involved in the symposium.
- Consumables in an amount not exceeding 500 EUR.
- Funds for childcare costs, e.g. travel expenses, accommodation costs or allowances for caregivers. If you apply for funds for childcare, please briefly explain how it is planned and how the costs are composed.

**Publication expenses.** The Foundation expects that the results of the meeting will be published online and open access. Typical conference proceedings and pure print publications will not be funded.

As part of the grant, the following services are provided by the Volkswagen Foundation:

- hotel reservations (please do not make any bookings yourself),
- provision of conference equipment at the conference center Xplanatorium Herrenhausen Palace,
- catering at the conference center Xplanatorium Herrenhausen Palace.

### **Joint Program**

Applicants are requested to include the following slots into their program, in order to foster exchange and networking of the participants of all symposia among each other and with representatives of the Foundation:

- Wednesday, August 07<sup>th</sup>: 9:30 to 13:00 (joint welcome, get-to-know, presentation of symposia topics, lunch),
- Thursday, August 08<sup>th</sup>: 12:00 to 13:00 (lunch) and from 16:00 (joint activity and dinner),
- Friday, August 09<sup>th</sup>: 12:00 to 13:00 (joint closing, afterwards lunch).

Please note that the joint program will be in English if the working language of at least one of the funded symposia is English.

### **General information**

The Foundation cannot be held responsible for any obligations entered into prior to the receipt of grant approval.

Applications that have been or are intended to be submitted in this or a similar form to another funding organization will not be processed by the Foundation. Applications that do not meet the formal requirements will not be submitted for review. The Foundation can only award funds to scientific institutions.

## **3 Application and Selection Procedure**

Eligible to apply are researchers from all fields and at all career levels after the PhD who are employed at a scientific institution in Germany. Researchers from foreign institutions can be involved as co-applicants. Applications can be submitted in German or English.

### **3.1 Review Procedure**

A decision is usually made within two months of the deadline. In addition to the objectives of the respective theme week described in section 1, the scientific quality of the event, the use of innovative and interactive event formats, and the conclusiveness of the overall concept are decisive factors in the review process. The Foundation also expects active participation of PhD students and postdocs as well as a significant inclusion of female scientists among both the speakers and the participants.

## **4 Application Checklist**

Applications have to be submitted online via the Volkswagen Foundation's electronic application system. If you are submitting your application together with other researchers, please make sure that all applicants register in the application portal and assign themselves to the application. Please note that there is a maximum of four co-applicants per application.

#### 4.1 Electronic Application – Instructions

Please read the information about the electronic application system on the website of the Volkswagen Foundation prior to submitting your application. Information can be found in the document "[Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips](#)". It is important that applicants register all involved parties early on in the process. Without a user profile it is not possible to invite co-applicants or to submit an application.

If you have technical questions about using the electronic application system, please contact [support@volkswagenstiftung.de](mailto:support@volkswagenstiftung.de).

#### 4.2 Application documents

The following documents are required:

##### 1. Proposal Text

Please use the template provided at the end of section 6 and on our homepage.

##### 2. Planned Program

##### 3. Short CVs of all Applicants

CVs should consist of a maximum of two pages per applicant (including a selection of relevant publications). Please combine all CVs in a single file.

##### 4. Budget Plan

Please enter a **budget plan** directly in the application system. Please note that funding is only granted to one institution, which is why you should submit a joint budget plan even in case of multiple applicants.

## 5 Contact

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## 6 Further Information

- [Theme Week on Ethics of Science: Ethical Dimensions of AI Research and AI in Research](#)
- [Template Proposal \(download\)](#)
- [FAQs for applicants](#)
- [Application System](#)
- [Electronic application made easy - instructions and tips](#)
- [Useful Information and downloads](#)
- [Recommendations for sustainable traveling](#)