

Call for Proposals

No. 63

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Priority Programme “Education as a Lifelong Process” (SPP 1646)

The Senate of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) has established a Priority Programme entitled “Education as a Lifelong Process” (SPP 1646) in 2011. The present call invites for the final two-year funding period.

Only little is known about education as a lifelong process and the cumulative and interactive impact of learning that occurs in multiple contexts over the life span. Since 2009 the National Educational Panel Study (NEPS) – as one of the biggest longitudinal data collection endeavors in social science in Europe and even beyond – provides high-quality, nationally representative longitudinal data on educational careers and developing competencies as well as the conditions and outcomes of educational histories in Germany in scientific use files. Since 2014, NEPS is hosted by the Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories (LifBi) at the University of Bamberg in cooperation with a German-wide network of excellence.

Six different cohorts of infants, preschool children, school children, students, and (young) adults are surveyed on a regular basis. Based on a multicohort sequence design a cohort of newborns (N = 3,481), a kindergarten cohort (N = 2,996; this sample was increased by N = 6,177 pupils at the entry into elementary school), a cohort starting in grade 5 (N = 5,283) and one in grade 9 (N = 15,238), a higher education student cohort (N = 18,267), and an adult cohort (N = 12,195) have been followed up with personal and/or telephone interviews, questionnaires and competence tests for several years. The total number of target persons is about 60,000. In addition to these individuals relevant persons of their social, regional and institutional contexts such as educators, teachers, school principals, peers, and parents are continuously interviewed.

NEPS is set up as an open research infrastructure providing unique longitudinal data for educational research for the scientific community. The Priority Programme aims to foster widespread scientific use of the data and the research opportunities offered by the NEPS. This call is open to all interested researchers working on educational issues in Germany from all related disciplines in social sciences. Equal access to the data is granted for prospective applicants. Further information is available at the NEPS homepage (see below).

The overall purpose of this final funding period is a first stocktaking of the full new NEPS research opportunities. A special focus refers to longitudinal analyses on basic and applied research questions. Running projects are encouraged to add a longitudinal extension by including more measurement points or more than one cohort to their research. Furthermore, new projects are invited especially for innovative longitudinal analyses and/or with an emphasis on

comparative, methodological and/or interdisciplinary research questions. The great advantage of NEPS data is the possibility to enrich the NEPS datasets with various other data sources to explore advanced research potentials. Initiatives to merge or link additional information to NEPS-data as well as to extend already existing enriched datasets in cooperation with other projects are encouraged and supported. For more information about the options and possibilities, please contact the coordinators of the Priority Programme (see below). Focussed proposals on issues like substantive or methodological research on competence development across the lifespan or in different age ranges, educational trajectories, international as well as cohort comparative analyses are especially welcome.

Submitted research projects should focus on one of the following themes:

- Substantive analyses utilising the NEPS database. This includes descriptions and analyses of educational transitions, careers, and competence developments over shorter and longer spans in the life course as well as all kinds of theory-driven studies on educational processes. The design and the data collection of the NEPS are based on a broad range of theories and hypotheses from sociology, psychology, education sciences, pedagogy, and economics regarding the conditions and consequences of education as a lifelong process.
- Linking and analysing NEPS data together with other national and/or international datasets in order to validate instruments and to conduct theory-driven (comparative) analyses. In particular, projects are welcome on cross-national or national comparisons of educational transitions or pathways and competence developments using data from various NEPS cohorts and other longitudinal studies. Projects are also invited which match data from other data sources in Germany (e.g. data from the statistical offices of the federal states in Germany or other data) to the NEPS database.
- Addressing methodological issues relevant to the NEPS. Analyses of education as a lifelong process require advanced quantitative longitudinal methodology and suitable measurement instruments. The Priority Programme therefore invites projects which apply and further develop new methodology and techniques of longitudinal data analysis. Particularly useful are projects with a focus on mode effects and/or validity (e.g. by comparing NEPS measurements and assessments to other large-scale studies), primarily in competence measurements over the life course and projects with a focus on the development of new methods of item and unit imputation in the case of longitudinal studies in a multilevel design. However, the Priority Programme also invites projects which further develop statistical and data management tools for longitudinal data analysis.

Proposals for the third two-year funding period should be submitted via DFG's electronic submission system elan by **29 March 2017**. Please select the appropriate call "SPP 1646 – Education as a Lifelong Process" when submitting your proposal. All proposals must be written in English.

In case you are using the elan system for the first time when submitting your proposal, please note that you first need to register at the elan portal. Please make sure that all applicants of your project (in case there is more than one) start their registration by **15 March 2017**. Proposal submission will only be possible after the registration of all applicants has been completed.

Further information

The DFG's electronic proposal processing system elan with proposal instructions and guidelines can be found at: <https://elan.dfg.de>

Proposal guidelines and preparation instructions are outlined in DFG forms 54.01en and 50.05en, part B, which can be found on the DFG's website at:
www.dfg.de/formulare/50_05
www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01

For further information please refer to the Priority Programme's webpage:
<https://spp1646.neps-data.de/Home.aspx>

Information on the NEPS panel study, questionnaires and data releases is available at:
www.neps-data.de/en-us/datacenter.aspx

For further information regarding the instruments of published and unpublished panel waves please contact the Research Data Center LifBi:
fdz@lifbi.de

For further information on the NEPS and its design please refer to:
 Blossfeld, H.-P., Roßbach, H.-G., & von Maurice, J. (Eds.) (2011). Education as a Lifelong Process – The German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS). [Special Issue] Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft: 14.
 Blossfeld, H.-P., von Maurice, J., Bayer, M., & Skopek, J. (Eds.) (2016). Methodological Issues of Longitudinal Surveys. The Example of the National Educational Panel Study. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

For scientific enquiries please contact the Priority Programme's coordinators:
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