



CTNR Medical Scientist Programme

Support for young researchers in Neurosciences

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1. Support for young researchers in neurosciences

The scientific area “Neurosciences”, institutionalized in the Centre for Transdisciplinary Neurosciences Rostock (CTNR), bundles the scientific activities of neuroscience in order to increase national and international visibility. The overarching goal of the CTNR is to identify and specifically address resilience mechanisms in neurodegeneration in order to implement innovative therapy concepts for primary and secondary neurodegenerative processes. The CTNR is a structural core institution for the scientific training and career development of young scientists. The CTNR is already supporting Clinician Scientists within the framework of the Rostock Academy for Clinician Scientists (RACS) with a special programme in neurosciences (Neuro Clinician Scientist Programme). Here, a research-protected period of two years within the specialist/subspecialist training time is funded in order to be able to carry out a theoretical research project in the field of neurosciences. The programme consists of an individual clinical, scientific and soft skill curriculum under the umbrella of the RACS. In addition, a highly qualified training and further education programmes for young scientists has been established, consisting of activities by CTNR members in the form of conferences, seminars and the CTNR Lecture Series. The support programme of the CTNR is now supplemented by a Neuro Medical Scientist Programme in order to enable (natural/life) scientists in the field of neurosciences who are not physicians to have a structured qualification path.

2. Neuro Medical Scientist Programme

The reasons for the necessity of structured career paths differ fundamentally between clinical and scientific young researchers. While for physicians during specialist/subspecialist training the lack of time is the main reason why it is more difficult to carry out one's own research project, in the non-clinical natural/life sciences, the uncertain contractual situation and the salary level are the decisive factors in declining an academic career. The CTNR funding programmes must also meet the subject-specific needs in order to keep and recruit young scientists at the location.

2.1 Target group

In the Neuro Medical Scientist Programme, medical scientists, i.e. (non-physician) medical researchers in theoretical, preclinical and clinical subjects, as well as non-medical researchers in other natural/life/engineering/social science fields with a neuroscientific focus are funded who planning to submit or already completed their doctoral thesis. Based on the recommendations of the Science Council, the CTNR thus promotes the early career phase

before and after the doctorate. Figure 1 shows the support programmes of the CTNR in the course of the different career paths.

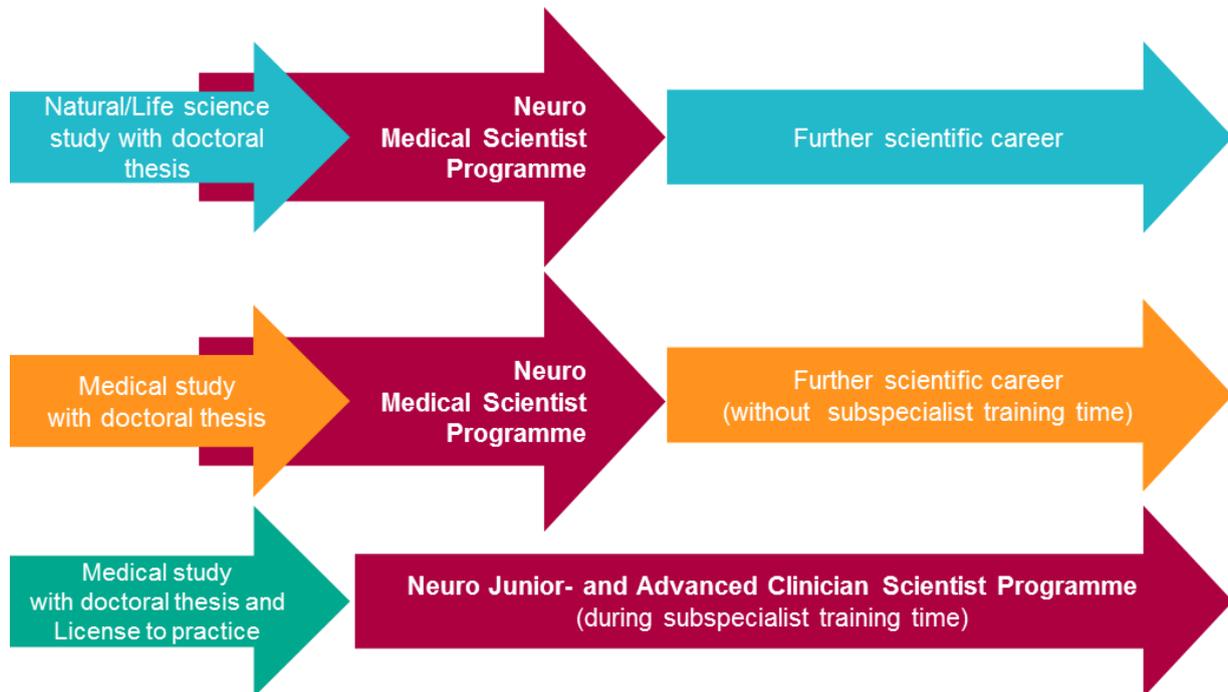


Figure 1: CTNR Medical and Clinician Scientist Programmes.

2.2 Aims of the funding

As part of the Neuro Medical Scientist Programme, a scientific position (E13) is offered for a period of max. 12 months (the position can be split up depending on incoming applications). The financial support is used to give young scientists the opportunity to apply for third-party funds (“Anschubfinanzierung”) or to complete the doctorate (“Überbrückungsfinanzierung”). The proposed project should contribute to the strategic aims of the CTNR (e.g. initiation of cooperative research projects).

2.3 Contents of the programme

The Medical Scientist Programme is embedded in the existing structures of the CTNR and the Rostock Academy for Clinician Scientists (RACS). The programme thus benefits from the focus-specific advanced training curriculum, which contains both clinical-specialist and clinical-scientific content in a balanced ratio. The curriculum also includes faculty-wide measures, among others offered by the CTNR, to impart general key qualifications (e.g. seminars on applying a DFG research grant). The aim is to integrate the curricular offers of the pre-existing training structures such as the Graduate Academy of the University of Rostock, the Collaborative Research Centre SFB 1270 “ELAINE” and its integrated graduate school (IRTG) and the interdisciplinary faculty, as optional modules.

In addition, the programme includes a mentoring scheme, the opportunity to participate in CTNR events (e.g. lecture series) and the support of networking and knowledge transfer through laboratory visits and retreats.

3. Recruitment

3.1 Entry requirements

Requirements for admission to the Neuro Medical Scientist Programme are:

- doctoral candidates (shortly before the completion of the doctorate)
- postdoctoral researcher (without license to practice, max. 12 months after doctorate)
- research in a medical or natural/life/engineering/social scientific field with a focus on neurosciences
- own publication with first authorship or at least two publications with shared first authorship (status at least "in print")
- selection of a receiving institution that is a member of the CTNR.

3.2 Recruitment process

The available position is advertised according to availability of funds.

The application includes:

- curriculum vitae and list of publications,
- specification of the structural goal of the funding and contribution to the CTNR strategic aims (e.g. completion of the doctoral thesis, completion of preliminary works for third-party applications, preparation of cooperative research projects)
- concept of the desired research project with a translational orientation and a neuroscientific focus,
- time schedule and work plan for the funding period with milestones,
- binding commitment by the receiving institution to give the candidate opportunities to submit an application for third-party funding, for further preparatory work and/or complete the doctorate.

The applications will be evaluated by external reviewers. The evaluation criteria are:

- originality of the proposed project,
- scientific quality of the work programme,
- scientific quality of the applicant,
- meaning of the structural goal for the CTNR.

The final decision on the funding of applicants for the Neuro Medical Scientist Programme is made by the CTNR Board.

4. Quality measures

4.1 Mentoring

Every medical scientist has a mentor (CTNR member) and an advisor/reviewer with an advisory function, which does not belong to the same institution and has to be a university professor, associate professor or private lecturer.

4.2 Evaluation

In addition to continuous programme monitoring, which ensure the success of the programme participants as well as the promised support of the mentor, an interim evaluation after the half of the funding period and a final evaluation in the form of a report to the CTNR board are carried out. The aim is to provide information about the current status of research/project development and/or preliminary work for an application, and to evaluate the prospect of a successful third-party funding application or completion of the doctoral thesis.

4.3 Receiving institution

Medical Scientists can be accepted by facilities/institutes/clinics whose heads are members of the CTNR. The institution must actively support the programme and provide rooms and technical equipment to achieve the objectives. The university professors who take part in the programme must feel committed to active mentoring and regularly allow appropriate time for discussions with the medical scientist.

5. Financing

The financing of the supported Medical Scientists is made from the funds allocated by the UMR for the scientific area “Neurosciences”.

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