



**Berlin University
Alliance**

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PRESS RELEASE

Berlin and Oxford establish the Centre for Advanced Studies

The Berlin University Alliance and the University of Oxford are taking forward their research partnership with the establishment of a Centre for Advanced Studies.

The Centre for Advanced Studies funds cooperating groups consisting of up to ten fellows working together. These cooperating groups are to conduct research on topics relating to the Berlin University Alliance's *Grand Challenge Initiatives*. The *Grand Challenge Initiatives* will be examining particularly relevant global challenges, such as the current issues of *Global Health* and *Social Cohesion*. The Centre is funded under the Excellence Strategy of the Federal Government and the Länder by the Berlin University Alliance and improves the parameters for making Oxford/Berlin collaborative research partnership more flexible from an organizational point of view and strengthening the exchange of expertise across national borders.

The cooperating groups should collaborate on an interdisciplinary basis and develop joint research ideas. The first group will be starting as a virtual group in 2020 and will focus on questions related to *Social Cohesion*. There are plans for a total of three cooperation groups for which the Berlin University Alliance will provide up to 300,000 euros each. The funding is intended to provide financial support for fellows of the centre and their research, as well as to enable summer schools and final conferences. The format is intended to provide maximum organizational flexibility for each cooperation, the structure of which can be chosen by the collaborating groups themselves. Flexible funding opportunities should also promote mobility for researchers and graduate students from Berlin and Oxford working on joint projects.

Governing Mayor and Senator for Higher Education and Research Michael Müller says: "I am delighted to see how the cooperation between Berlin and Oxford has grown and evolved in recent years and how researchers are working together to take on the big issues of our time, such as social cohesion and global health. Both Berlin and Oxford are centers of science and research, and they are retaining their close ties regardless of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. Their strong relationship makes an important contribution to German-British cooperation. By the Oxford/Berlin partnership, we are bolstering our city as an international research hub."

Prof. Dr. Günter M. Ziegler, President of Freie Universität Berlin and spokesperson for the Berlin University Alliance, highlights: "Oxford and Berlin are a better match than it might seem at first glance: in top research, diversity of subjects, infrastructure of museums and collections, and at both universities, many outstanding researchers full of enthusiasm for collaborative work and creative exchange – in short, a 'match made in heaven'. I am pleased that the Oxford/Berlin partnership is now taking this next big step towards long-term cooperation."

Prof. Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford says: "Oxford University has always valued its status as an international university and, now - possibly more than ever



before - we must reaffirm the importance of maintaining international links between academics, researchers and students. Oxford's partnership with the Berlin University Alliance has already delivered important advances in research and scholarship, and the formation of a Centre for Advanced Studies promises to achieve much more. We are extremely grateful to our partners in Berlin for taking the lead on the establishment of the Centre and look forward to the participation of Oxford colleagues in its activities over the coming years.”

The Oxford/Berlin Research Partnership

The University of Oxford and the Berlin University Alliance formed a research partnership at the end of 2017, and over the next two years jointly provided funding for around 40 workshops and smaller initiatives in all disciplines. More than 1,000 researchers and students from Berlin and Oxford have been involved in the partnership's programs so far, benefitting from over 1 million euros of funding. The Berlin University Alliance has allocated 1.1 million euros to fund three cooperating groups at the Centre for Advanced Studies over the next three years.

The Berlin University Alliance

The Berlin University Alliance is a consortium consisting of three major Berlin universities – Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin – and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, established to shape research and education in Berlin. The four partners joined forces to further develop Berlin as a research hub with international drawing power. Together the partners explore major societal challenges, increase public outreach, promote the training of junior researchers, address issues of quality and standards in research, and share resources in the areas of research infrastructure, teaching, diversity, equal opportunities, and internationalisation. The Berlin University Alliance is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the state of Berlin under the Excellence Strategy of the Federal Government and the Länder.

Researchers from at least two of the four partners Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin already work together in all seven Clusters of Excellence based in Berlin, in 70 percent of the partners' 30 Collaborative Research Centres funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), and in more than 75 percent of the partners' 47 doctoral programmes. Since 2012, researchers within the Berlin University Alliance have won six Leibniz Prizes (the most important research award in Germany) and 55 ERC Grants from the European Research Council.

Press Contact:

Christina Camier
Press Spokesperson
Berlin University Alliance
Tel.: +49 170 590 06 21
Email: christina.camier@berlin-university-alliance.de