

# **FRAUNHOFER TALENTA**

## **CAREER PROGRAM FOR FEMALE SCIENTISTS**



Integrated Personnel Management  
[www.fraunhofer.de/talenta](http://www.fraunhofer.de/talenta)



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## STARTING POINT AND GOAL

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Fraunhofer is the largest organization for application-oriented research in Europe. With its focus on key technologies of relevance to the future, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft plays a central role in the innovation process. Fraunhofer Institutes contribute to the competitiveness of the economy through their research and development work. Our research fields are geared toward the needs of people: health, security, communication, mobility, energy and the environment. It is precisely topics like these, which are so important for our society, that make people want to work for Fraunhofer. Our researchers find it particularly satisfying to develop solutions to practical problems. The research topics at the 72 institutes are challenging and exciting. State-of-the-art technical equipment allows researchers to work at the highest scientific level. In addition, Fraunhofer offers outstanding development opportunities for new scientific talent.

It is one of Fraunhofer's corporate policy goals to ensure equal professional opportunities for women and men. Since 2012, this goal has been pursued with targeted measures that follow an overarching concept. One of the core aspects of this concept is the development and career program TALENTA, which was initiated in 2013. The aim of the program is to increase the proportion of female scientists and in particular the proportion of female scientists in management positions, in order to meet Fraunhofer's aspirations regarding the institute-specific cascade.

Fraunhofer TALENTA is a development and career program that was designed to help institutes increase the proportion of female scientists across all career levels. The program is founded on two pillars: financial support for the respective organizational unit in order to attract female scientists and managers and nurture their careers over the long term; and a focus on the individual careers of female scientists at Fraunhofer. TALENTA kicks in at various career stages and offers both women in entry-level positions as well as female scientists on their way to a leadership and specialist career the same individual development program that it offers female managers.

In accordance with these general goals, TALENTA has various aspects that distinguish it from pure talent/career programs:

- As an acquisition tool, the program reserves a portion of its places for external applicants. The Fraunhofer Institutes can use TALENTA for HR marketing and target women in their campaigns.
- The focus is on STEM subjects, in particular engineering and technical subject groups, in which women are still underrepresented. This is designed to take account of the fact that the competition for female talent is stronger in these subjects than in subjects where women are better represented.

- Candidates make their applications in conjunction with the Fraunhofer Institute directly responsible for nurturing the scientist's career. One of the criteria for being accepted onto the program, therefore, is an evaluation of the candidate's career development prospects at the institute.
- Evaluation of a candidate's professional/technical suitability is carried out at the institute by means of an internal selection process, the parameters of which are determined by the institute.

As a basic principle, all Fraunhofer Institutes have the same chance to sponsor a candidate, and so only one application is accepted per institute and per program strand in each selection round.

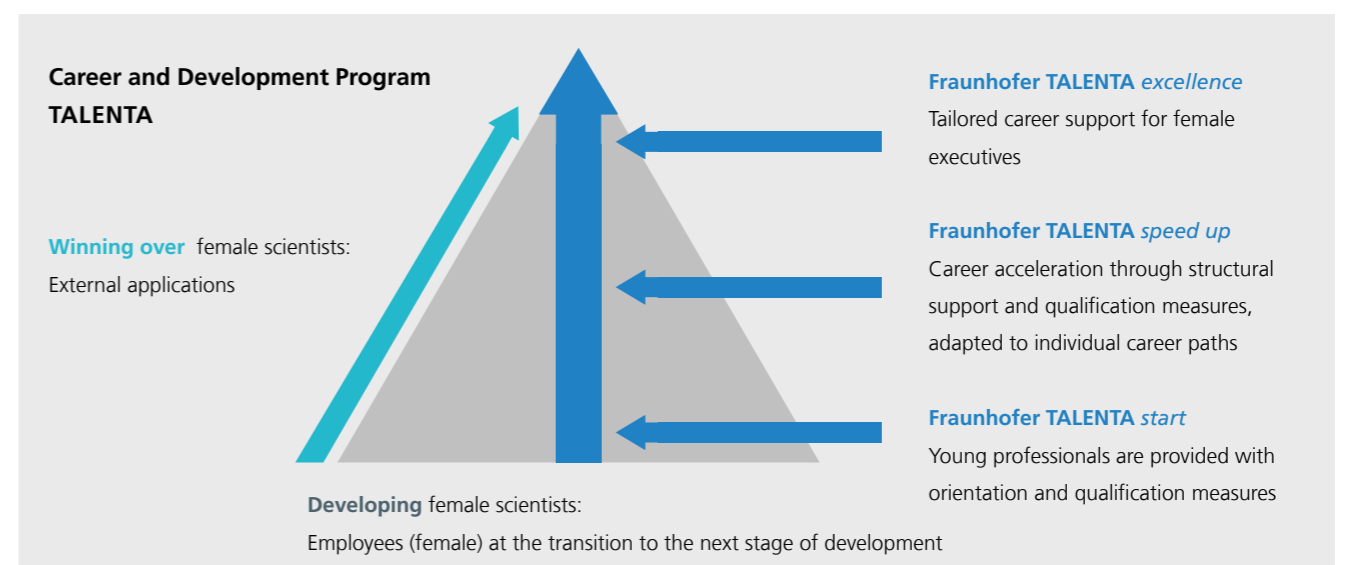


## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Fraunhofer TALENTA is a two-year career program for female scientists at different phases in their career. TALENTA contains three development strands:

- TALENTA *start* is aimed at female university graduates and gives them guidance and advice as they embark on their careers in applied research.
- TALENTA *speed up* is designed for female scientists both within Fraunhofer and beyond, who already have professional experience (with or without management experience). It supports each candidate's development at her respective career stage and offers professional training that matches her individual career path.
- TALENTA *excellence* is aimed at women who aspire to or already hold a high management position at Fraunhofer – such as head of a department or business unit – and to become established researchers and managers.

Depending on the career level, TALENTA is open to both internal and external applicants.







## START OFF: FRAUNHOFER TALENTA START

TALENTA *start* is the right program for women setting out on their professional life in applied research and starting their career with Fraunhofer. TALENTA *start* is designed to attract more female scientists to Fraunhofer. The target group is university graduates with a master's degree and either with minimal professional experience or none at all. The program supports scientists during their early career at the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. They are offered orientation for the beginning of their career – and opportunities for further development with regard to their scientific career and a doctoral degree.

Through an individual accompanying program, they can acquire the general competencies required beyond their own specialism. Every year, TALENTA *start* is open to around 30 candidates.

Examples of starting points for receiving a TALENTA *start* place:

- a) A candidate works as a student employee at Fraunhofer, and the institute wants to hire her as a scientific employee, e.g. to develop a topic with doctorate potential.
- b) A student does her master's thesis at Fraunhofer; when she has completed the thesis, both sides want her to stay on as a scientific employee.
- c) A (female) graduate sends her unsolicited application or applies for a job at an institute; the institute and the candidate apply jointly for a place in the program.

## ACCELERATE: FRAUNHOFER TALENTA SPEED UP

TALENTA *speed up* is designed for scientists inside or outside Fraunhofer with who are about to (or have recently) transition(ed) to a leadership or specialist career. The goal is to support the candidate in her development and provide her with suitable qualification courses. This strand is intended particularly for scientists on the threshold of their next career stage or who are specifically engaged in career planning. There are approx. 30 places available for the target group every year.

Examples of starting points for receiving a TALENTA *speed up* place:

- a) The candidate works at Fraunhofer, and wants to start a doctorate or is already working on one; she applies for the program for a portion of her doctorate period.
- b) The candidate has completed her doctorate and applies for the program for the transition to her next career phase, such as building up a group or establishing a new business unit.
- c) The candidate is recruited internally or externally to develop a research topic, works on it (e.g. for a group) and applies for the support.
- d) The external or internal candidate is in the process of assuming her first management position and applies for the support for the initial period, until the unit or group has become established.
- e) The candidate returns from parental leave and applies for support, e.g. to develop a new topic or work on her doctorate.

## REFINE: FRAUNHOFER TALENTA EXCELLENCE

TALENTA *excellence* is aimed at women who are working towards or are already holding a senior management position at Fraunhofer – e.g. as heads of department. The goal is to further one's own professional and personal development and to shape one's individual profile as a researcher and manager.

When scientists are accepted on the program, they receive additional funding for HR resources in their department in order to give them scope for enhancing their scientific profile.

Examples of starting points for receiving a TALENTA *excellence* place:

- a) The internal or external candidate is taking on a management position and applies for the support to develop their business unit.
- b) The manager applies for the support during her postdoctoral qualification work



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## APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

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A candidate's application to take part in TALENTA is carried out jointly with the institute that chose to nominate her. The application must include both of the following:

- The candidate's CV
- Motivational letter from the candidate
- A letter of recommendation from the institute

**The selection criteria:**

- Subject-matter relevance: the focus is on STEM subjects, especially scientific and technical engineering fields
- Target group relevance: suitability of the candidate regarding criteria of target groups (depending on stage: first job with public sector collective-wage agreement, career level and career goals)
- Argumentation for application: evaluation of letter of recommendation

Candidates are selected according to the selection criteria described above by a panel of experts made up of representatives from HR, institute liaisons, the Scientific and Technical Council (STC), the central works council and the central equal opportunities officer.

The institutes are enjoined to use the program to advertise for female scientific talent. If an institute gains a new candidate on account of the program but does not secure a place for her in the program, it can earmark the candidate for the next round of places in a year's time.



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## KEY ELEMENTS OF FUNDING

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The program's financial support to the institutes consists in the additional financing for a position to the amount of 2.000 € monthly. This sum is to be invested in a position: that is, the candidate receives an employment contract at Fraunhofer for at least the term of the two-year program support. Defining the overall working hours will remain the prerogative of the institute; however, the contract must be for at least 50 percent of the 39 hours per week provided for under current collective bargaining agreements. Under the terms of the financial support, the candidate must be freed from her work duties as required to further her own career goals – for example, to work on her doctorate. The organizational unit records the time in which the candidate is unavailable for project work and posts it under the project number to be created accordingly.



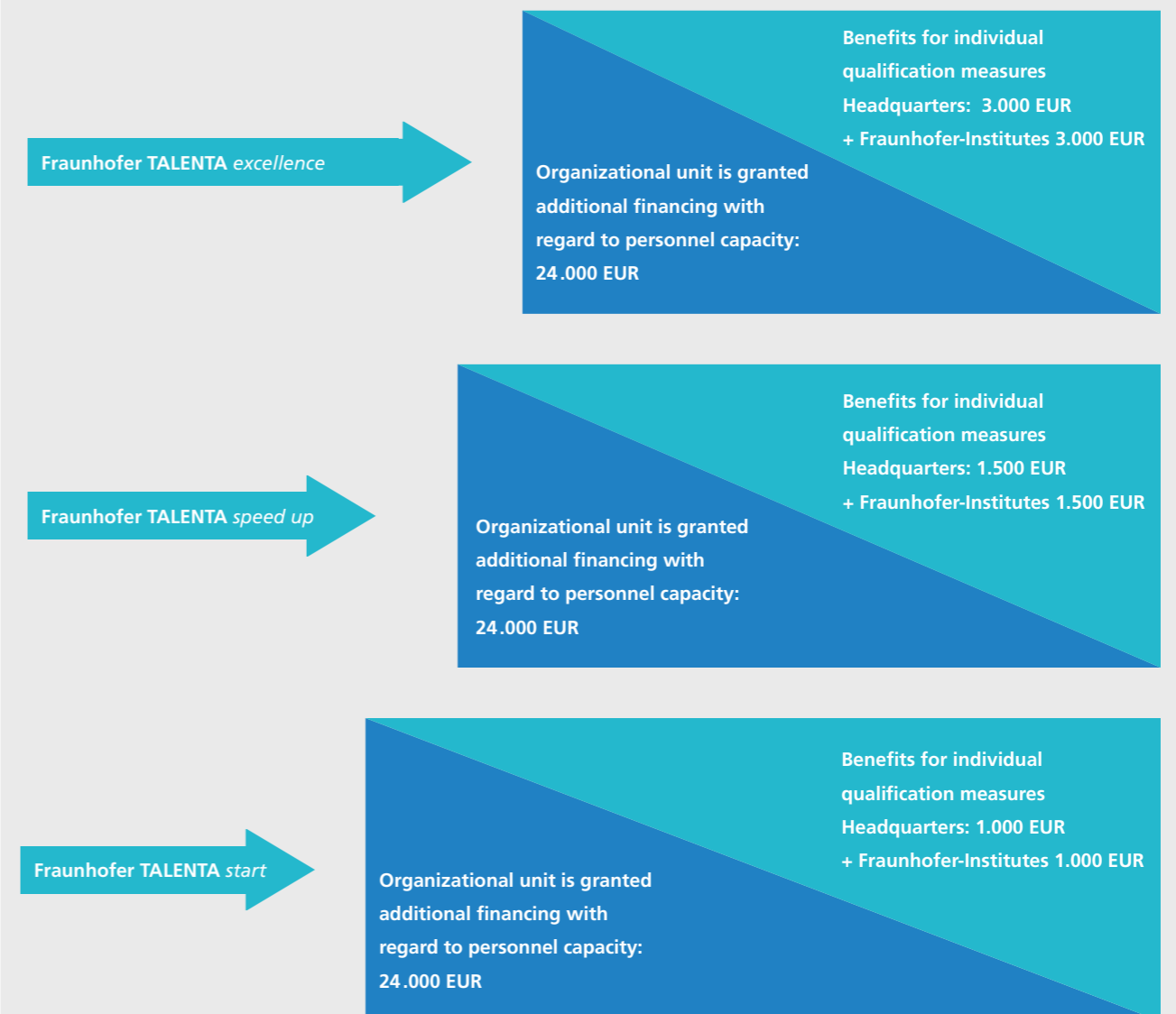


Centrally funded working hours comprise two days per week on average, independent of the contract type. The specific structure of »career time« is the prerogative of the respective institute or organizational unit and the candidate herself and can be adjusted to operational needs. Central HR development provides »recommendations for the structuring of career time.«

On the stage of TALENTA *excellence*, the successful candidate's organizational unit is granted a subsidy for HR costs. The additional financing amounts to a lump sum of 2000 euros monthly.

During TALENTA, the scientists receive a qualification budget to put together their own individual support program. For the career development and qualification offer, a budget that is funded 50 percent by headquarters is created for every candidate.

Overview of the annual funding per female scientist





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## INDIVIDUAL INITIATION INTO PROGRAM

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At the start of the program, the manager and the participant have a kick-off meeting to discuss and determine the candidate's specific career topics. In this context, »career« means targeted professional further development and the visible assumption of greater responsibility, taking due account of the requirements and opportunities in the organization and the candidate's individual potential, competencies and current phase of life. The career topic describes the challenge the participant sets herself for the two years of the program in order to achieve her overarching career objective. Examples of career topics include taking on a doctorate, developing a field of business, or managing a research project.

**In the kick-off meeting, the following questions can be clarified:**

- Which career goal is the main priority during TALENTA?
- How is the career topic embedded in the orientation of the organizational unit, and which challenges and requirements does this produce?
- Which competencies, qualifications and experiences are necessary for the next professional development stage or in order to reach the career goal?
- How exactly should the career time be organized?
- Which »time model« is realistic with regard to the requirements of the participant or the manager, or with regard to the requirements of the group/department?
- Are the objectives and planning realistic?

The career topic and the progress of the time spent on career should be continuously discussed. Half-yearly meetings between the relevant manager and the participant provide a suitable forum for this discussion. In these meetings, the current state of progress is discussed and the career topic can also be amended as required (»career topic follow-up«). The meetings should also cover the candidate's qualification requirements, which should be specified and organized at the institute depending on the boundary conditions in place.



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## CAREER TIME AND RESEARCH TIME

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### ***TALENTA start and TALENTA speed up***

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A core aspect of the program is »career time«, which gives the scientists at the start and speed up levels the time and space for their own professional further development. In the kick-off meeting, the parties should discuss in detail how career time can be used for the candidate's development. Depending on the career topic, it can be useful to draw up a rough schedule that sets out when career time is to be taken and which main aspects of the topic are to be worked on during this time. This measure is designed to establish a binding yet flexible plan that takes into account both the candidate's career development and the organization's operational needs. An individualized solution should be found for each candidate.

An example of how career time might be structured, depending on requirements, is for the candidate to be given regular dedicated free time of one or two days a week or several consecutive days per month. Another example is to give the candidate several weeks off in a row in the end phase of her doctorate. The manager and the candidate should also specifically discuss what should be accomplished during career time.

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### ***TALENTA excellence***

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In this part of the program, participants are granted funding in addition to the personnel funds of their organizational unit. Each participant can use these resources to increase the personnel capacity in her unit with the goal of giving her greater scope to enhance her scientific profile.





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## TALENTA KICK-OFF EVENT

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A common element of the TALENTA program is the TALENTA kick-off event in the first quarter of the funding period. For the TALENTA candidates – approximately 70 female researchers each year, in the three program lines *start*, *speed up* and *excellence* – the kick-off event marks the beginning of their participation in the program. To begin with, the focus is on welcoming the participants and introducing them to the TALENTA group. On the second day, workshops will be held in the three program lines, focusing on the topics of content, requirements, and aspects of the specific development phase (e.g. with regard to obtaining a doctoral degree, setting up a group, placing a research topic, and edited leadership), while the third day is reserved for setting and verbalizing individual career goal. Here, the female scientists and female executives have the opportunity to reflect on their individual strengths, resources, and personal frameworks – and to use them to focus on their career goal and their implementation.





Thanks to an extensive workshop program tailored to the respective program line, the participants are able to prepare themselves for their TALENTA-time in order to successfully work on their career goals:

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## POSITIONING

In order to achieve goals, it is important to find out what resources are available and what the areas of development are. Thus, the participants will reflect on their strengths and competences – and they will identify areas in which they wish to make progress, and try to find out where to get according support. Based on this, they should be well prepared to work on their own goals in the scope of TALENTA.

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## FROM AN IDEA TO A DOCTORAL DEGREE

A doctorate is not a sprint – it's a marathon. This is true with regard to one's motivation, but also regarding the strategies of time-management, the actual writing, and self-management. The workshop helps participants to define milestones for a doctoral degree in the course of TALENTA and to make the necessary preparations.

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## TARGETED DEVELOPMENT IN A LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER

What are the requirements for the technical and managerial staff at Fraunhofer and how to deal with expectations and needs of others – or with possible resistance? This workshop offers answers. The participants will reflect on their experiences, and learn techniques to help them shape their own professional or leadership personality.

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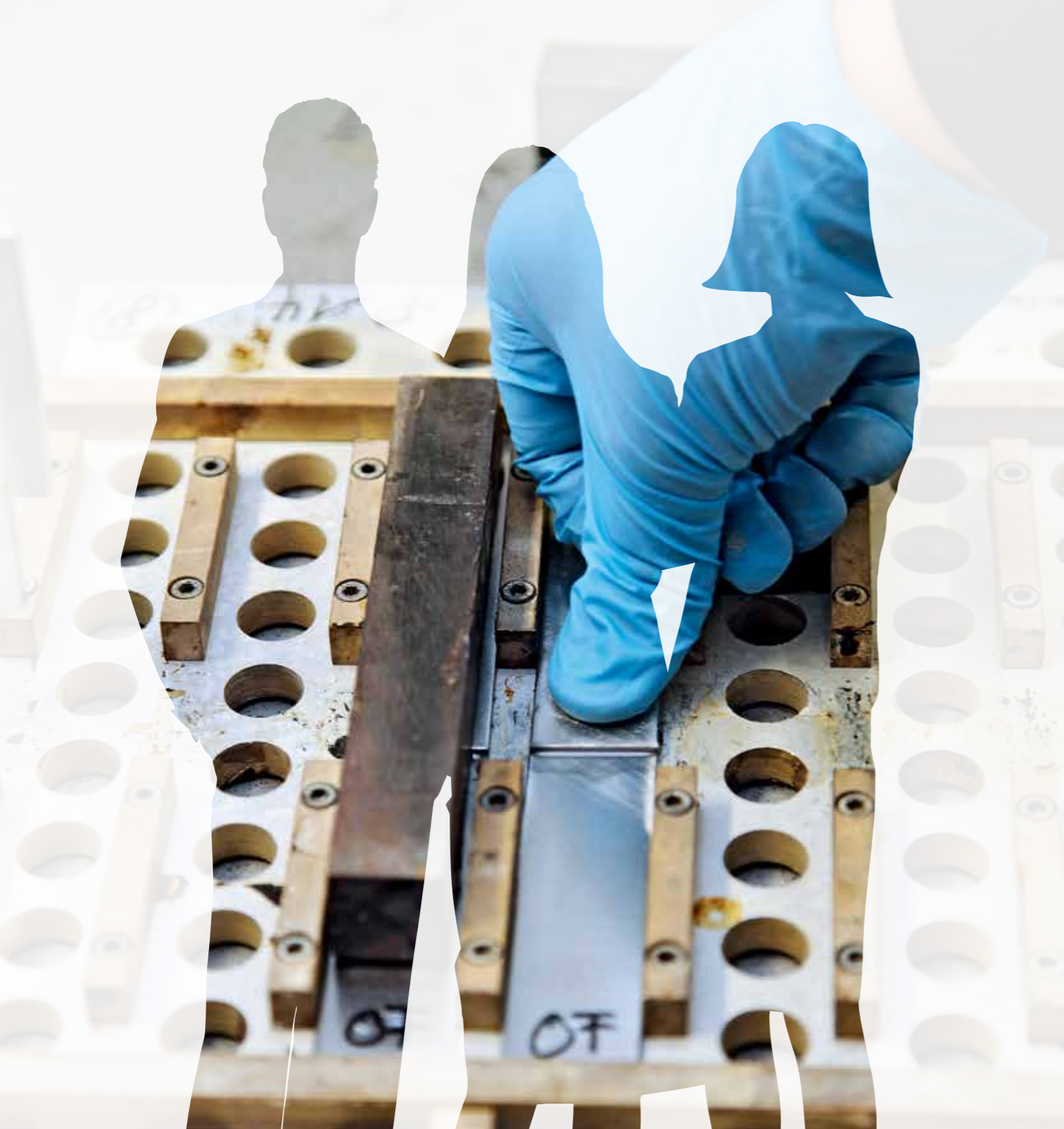
## LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY

For executives at the institute, it is an exciting and often challenging task to bring one's own leadership actions into line with overarching strategy requirements. Therefore, three different levels of management are considered: the level of the organization along with its overall strategy, the level of the team or the departmental or project strategy, and the level of self-leadership in order to successfully position oneself in this field of tension.

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## FROM DESIRE TO GOAL

In the scope of TALENTA, the participants are able to work on their professional goals. In order to use this »career time« successfully, it is important to strategically plan career goals by defining landmarks and resources, and to incorporate the goals into one's daily work routine.



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## WELL QUALIFIED

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TALENTA offers female scientists an opportunity to strategically develop their career through partial financing of their job position and especially tailored means of qualification and networking. Against this background, participants can rely on a qualification budget that fits their respective career goals and the program line. During the program, they can use this budget for seminars, coaching, mentoring, conferences, or internships. Depending on the framework conditions at the respective institute, an advisory discussion (to decide on an individual qualification program) is carried out either by the local HR developers or by the personnel development staff of the head office.

In addition, a qualification program tailored to the respective program line will be offered to the TALENTA participants. In the program line *start*, a focus is placed on obtaining a doctoral degree, on staying motivated, and also on practical techniques to perform well in everyday working life and to present one's competencies clearly and concisely. In a workshop on leadership and strategy, participants in the lines *speed up* and *excellence* can reflect on their leadership actions and develop approaches to position themselves between the priorities of research, management, and leadership.



Examples of qualification offers for participants:

### TALENTA *start*: Starting off

#### Core topic: Individual assessment and orientation

- Individual strengths, competences, and talents
- What can I build on?
- Career paths at Fraunhofer
- Planning and beginning a doctorate and/or means of professional development

#### Fraunhofer Educational Program

- Project management – practical knowledge
- Doctorate I – How to obtain a doctorate
- Presentation techniques
- Strategic self-management
- Working together effectively

#### TALENTA Qualifications

- How to obtain a doctorate
- How to balance a doctorate and project work
- Concise performance – how to be confident and convincing in your job
- Balancing family and work life

### TALENTA.net

A virtual platform for mutual exchange and networking, with forums focusing on different career-related topics

### TALENTA *speed up*: Accelerating your career

#### Core topic: Strategic career planning with Fraunhofer

- Scientific specialist and management career
- Strategic career planning
- Assessment and coaching

#### Fraunhofer Educational Program

- Project management – advanced workshop
- Special topics of project management
- Doctorate II – »Getting it done«
- Management Training I + II
- Acquisition techniques
- Realization and Valorization
- Possibilities to go abroad and back
- Intercultural competences

#### TALENTA Qualifications

- How to balance a doctorate and project work
- Concise performance – how to be confident and convincing in your job
- How to manage and solve conflicts confidently in a leadership position
- My personality as a leader
- How to balance family and work life
- Leadership and strategy
- Strategic research funding
- Career planning to reconcile scientific excellence and leadership

### TALENTA.net

A virtual platform for mutual exchange and networking, with forums focusing on different career-related topics

### TALENTA *excellence*: Perfecting your career

#### Core topic: Leadership Excellence

- Individual further education and training (e.g. MBA)
- Stay abroad, international networking
- Individual seminar and coaching offer as part of the executive training at Fraunhofer
- Individual coaching, e.g. in connection with personality profile and potential analysis (voluntary)

#### TALENTA Qualifications

- Management and leadership – Room for research
- How to manage and solve conflicts confidently in a leadership position
- My personality as a leader
- Leadership and strategy
- Balancing family and work life
- Strategic research funding
- Career planning to reconcile scientific excellence and leadership





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## ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM

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### TALENTA START PILOT-INITIATIVE TO ATTRACT (FEMALE) GRADUATES

The pilot initiative helps the institutes to attracting more (external) female graduates, relying on target group-specific personnel marketing and recruiting.

Institutes that have a vacant position for graduates in the field of STEM can advertise the vacancy (internally and externally) in cooperation with central HR marketing and TALENTA, and will be granted an additional TALENTA-space for two years – funded with € 24,000 per year. Together, the institutes and the central office will develop a target group-specific recruiting plan for job advertisements and the application procedure.





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## TALENTA SPEED UP MENTORING

Mentoring serves an instrument of career promotion and counseling, combining means of personal development as a specialist or as a manager, and as a researcher.

- Peer Mentoring: 21 participants are initially offered a 6-month period of peer mentoring. At the beginning of the program, three participants form a peer group. The group offers space for exchange of experience and knowledge, advice, and discussion. Additional expertise is provided by a mentor of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, who advises the group for six months.
- Tandem Mentoring: After completing the peer mentoring, 15 participants can join an individual mentoring phase for a further 6 months with a mentor of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. This advice and support offers them the opportunity to strategically plan their scientific careers alongside their leadership and specialist careers.

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## TALENTA EXCELLENCE MENTORING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PROFESSORSHIP)

The excellence program serves to strengthen the profile of researchers as well as executives by providing them with mentoring opportunities and means to promote their academic careers, balancing their leadership position and their path to obtaining a doctorate.

- Cross-excellence mentoring: The participants can benefit from 12 months of mentoring by experienced institute directors or university professors from their own professional community, including especially tailored advice and support offers.
- Financial support and vocation development plan: Established (female) executives can benefit from financial grants from the headquarters, e.g. for publications, stays abroad, or for more research time – enabling them to acquire additional skills and to build up networks.



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## WELL CONNECTED – TALENTA.NET

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### TALENTA.NET

The purpose of TALENTA is to facilitate stronger networking between female scientists at Fraunhofer. All scientists in the program can interact via a web platform. On TALENTA.net, they are kept informed about new developments in the program, interesting career topics and the latest news from the world of Fraunhofer. In addition, the scientists can discuss their own topics of interest in individual forums. Moreover, the scientists can remain connected via TALENTA.net after the program is over for them.

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### TALENTA.DAY

In the framework of the TALENTA program, the establishment and maintenance of a network with other female researchers and female executives at Fraunhofer is an important goal – as the participants explicitly expect the TALENTA program to help them to cooperate even more closely and to make an active contribution to the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. Thus, the TALENTA Day has been an important part of the program since 2017, as it actively promotes and supports networking between the participants and helps to increase their visibility. In dialog sessions, the researchers can discuss topics relevant to career and research with internal and external experts and plan further cooperation in working groups.





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## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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During the funding period, the TALENTA participants and their seniors will be asked to participate in an online survey on three separate occasions – at the beginning, at half-time, and at the end of the project. The survey helps to evaluate the ongoing program and to review and plan the future course of the program. In addition, it provides information on how career time is structured in terms of content and organization – and to what extent the participants have managed to implement their career goals. The final survey also serves to analyze and evaluate the TALENTA participation.

In a final discussion, the participants and their seniors have the opportunity to review the past two years and to clarify to what extent the initial goals have been achieved.

By providing additional financial means and more time to engage in strategic career planning, qualification measures, and networking offers, TALENTA makes an important contribution to help female researchers and executives achieve their career goals, gain visibility, and take on more responsibility. Thus, TALENTA plays an important role in increasing the number of female executives and promoting equal opportunities within the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

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