



The Cluster for Nucleic Acid Sciences and Technologies - NUCLEATE
invites applications for

Independent Group Leaders (f/m/d) at NUCLEATE Excellence Cluster

The Cluster for Nucleic Acid Sciences and Technologies (<https://nucleate-cluster.de>) is a joint research network spanning **Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU)**, **Technische Universität München (TUM)**, and **Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMU)**. NUCLEATE was founded as a new Cluster of Excellence in 2026 funded through the Excellence Strategy of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). The NUCLEATE Cluster unites internationally recognized research in nucleic acid sciences and technologies across all dimensions, from fundamental discoveries to translational applications. By connecting researchers across disciplines and institutions, the cluster establishes a globally visible center for DNA- and RNA-based research and innovation.

To complement our research activities, **we invite applications for three Independent Junior Group Leader positions**. Each successful candidate will receive an attractive start-up package to establish an independent research program. They will become an integral member of the NUCLEATE Cluster, participating in its collaborative research activities, scientific exchange, training programs, and networking opportunities. **One position is available at each of the three partner universities** and will be affiliated with one of the cluster's dedicated host institutions:

- Gene Center, LMU
- TUM School of Medicine and Health, Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology
- Institute for Molecular Infection Biology / Rudolf Virchow Center, JMU

We seek highly motivated scientists with an outstanding scientific track record and demonstrated potential for scientific independence and leadership in fields related to the aims of the cluster. Research topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Prokaryotic innate immunity
- RNA networks
- Chemical biology of nucleic acids

Candidates are expected to conduct internationally competitive research, actively contribute to the scientific activities of the NUCLEATE Cluster, acquire third-party funding, and engage with local and international research networks. Participation in teaching and the training of early-career researchers (in English and/or German) is welcome. Research excellence, originality, and the potential for scientific interactions within the cluster will be key selection criteria.

Applicants should be at an early stage of their scientific career. At the application deadline, ideally no more than four years should have elapsed since the award of the doctoral degree (or seven years in the field of medicine). Required qualifications include a doctoral degree in life sciences, computer sciences, pharmacy or medicine, an outstanding publication record, international research experience, and a strong commitment to advancing nucleic acid research across experimental, technological, computational, or translational domains.

The successful candidates will receive attractive packages including personnel and financial resources, access to state-of-the-art infrastructure and innovative technologies, and integration into a vibrant interdisciplinary research environment. They will benefit from close interactions with leading researchers across the NUCLEATE Cluster network, access to shared scientific and technological platforms, and extensive professional development opportunities and family-support services offered by the host institutions.

The positions are available at the earliest possible date. Appointments will initially be made for five years and may be extended by one additional year, subject to evaluation and funding regulations. Salary is based on the pay scale for the public sector (TV-L).

NUCLEATE Cluster is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion and actively promotes equal opportunities. Applications from women are particularly encouraged in order to increase the representation of women in science and leadership positions. Equally qualified candidates with disabilities will be given preference in accordance with applicable regulations. International applications are highly welcome.

For general information, please contact

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For further information specific to each host institution, please contact:

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TUM: Prof. Dr. Stefan Engelhardt, E-Mail: Stefan.Engelhardt@tum.de

JMU: Prof. Dr. Cynthia Sharma, E-Mail: Cynthia.Sharma@uni-wuerzburg.de

Application

Please submit your application, **stating your preferred host institution in the subject line, as a single PDF file** via email to info@nucleate-cluster.de and include:

- Cover letter (maximum 1 page) outlining your motivation and fit for the position at the respective host institution
- Curriculum vitae, including research achievements and collaborations
- Complete publication list, highlighting up to five key publications with a brief statement of their significance and your contribution
- Research plan (maximum 3 pages)
- Contact details of at least three referees

Application deadline: 16 August 2026

By submitting your application, you agree to the processing of your data as part of the selection process.

