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**Excellence funding for Inequality and Collective Behaviour cluster initiatives**

**Two cluster initiatives at the University of Konstanz awarded funding through the German Excellence Strategy – Extension of University of Excellence status possible**

Fantastic news for the University of Konstanz: Two of its three cluster initiatives will receive funding through the German Excellence Strategy starting 1 January 2019. Professor Dr Kerstin Krieglstein, University of Konstanz rector since August 2018, reacts to the news: “I am delighted to see what the University of Konstanz has achieved. Two of the three cluster applications were successful. My heartfelt congratulations to all the researchers involved. This means we can continue to compete for a place among the best universities in Germany, in a competition we, among only six universities, have already been successful in since 2007”.

The German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) announced today that the research concepts entitled “The Politics of Inequality: Perceptions, Participation and Policies” and the “Centre for the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour” were both evaluated positively by the Committee of Experts for the Excellence Strategy. This success in the Clusters of Excellence funding line means the University of Konstanz is in the race for the Universities of Excellence funding line. The university now has until 10 December 2018 to submit its application for the second competition.

**The Politics of Inequality**

The Cluster of Excellence “The Politics of Inequality: Perceptions, Participation and Policies” investigates the links between inequality and political processes. At the epicentre of the project lies the analysis of the cycle comprising the perception of political inequality, political mobilization and legislation.The interdisciplinary cluster draws upon expertise from the fields of political science, sociology, economics, linguistics, psychology and empirical educational research.

It is coordinated by speaker Professor Marius Busemeyer, Department of Politics and Public Administration as well as co-speaker Professor Claudia Diehl, Department of History and Sociology and co-speaker Professor Nils Weidmann, Department of Politics and Public Administration.

**Centre for the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour**

The Cluster of Excellence “Centre for the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour” is dedicated to data-based research on collective behaviour, from swarm intelligence of animal groups and human decision-making processes to economic networks. It is a collaboration between the University of Konstanz and the two units of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology based at the University of Konstanz and in Radolfzell respectively. The research cluster utilizes state-of-the-art sensor systems such as the space-based ICARUS module for tracking animal movements and will be located in the cutting-edge “Centre for Visual Computing of Collectives” (VCC) that is currently being built in Konstanz. The cluster draws on expertise from the fields of biology, psychology, physics, economics as well as computer science.

The Cluster of Excellence “Centre for the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour” is coordinated by the three co-speakers Professor Iain Couzin, Department of Biology, Professor Oliver Deussen, Department of Computer and Information Science as well as Professor Urs Fischbacher, Department of Economics.

“The research that is conducted in these two Clusters of Excellence at the University of Konstanz is highly relevant to society: Answers to questions about political inequality and complex collective processes will shape the future of our society. The same is true for the questions about new functional materials our “ChemLife” team strives to answer. Although this cluster initiative will not receive Excellence funding, it will remain one of the University of Konstanz's focus areas that we will continue to develop in the years to come”, says Rector Kerstin Krieglstein.

**About the Excellence Strategy of the German Federal and State Governments**  
The Excellence Strategy is the follow-up programme to the Excellence Initiative and is coordinated by both the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR). The goal of the Excellence Strategy is to continue to develop and enhance Germany as an international research location and to strengthen its international competitiveness. Furthermore, successful projects initiated during the Excellence Initiative are to be provided a long-term perspective.

The Excellence Strategy includes two funding lines: The funding line Clusters of Excellence to promote special research projects in internationally competitive research fields and the funding line Universities of Excellence for the sustained support of universities as they continue to develop top-level international research. The pre-requisite for a possible “University of Excellence” status is having at least two Clusters of Excellence funded through the Excellence Strategy.

**The Excellence Initiative at the University of Konstanz**  
The University of Konstanz was successful in the first year of the Excellence Initiative when its Cluster of Excellence “Cultural Foundations of Social Integration” was recognized in 2006. This was followed by the recognition of its Institutional Strategy “Modell Konstanz – Towards a Culture of Creativity” as well as its Konstanz Research School Chemical Biology in 2007. In the second round of the Excellence Initiative in 2012, the university could extend all previously accepted programmes, including its Institutional Strategy, and even add another graduate school, the Graduate School of Decision Sciences, thus further strengthening its position as a top-level research institution.

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| **Key facts:**   * Two of the three cluster initiatives at the University of Konstanz successful in the German Excellence Strategy competition * Opportunity to compete in the second funding line and thus renew the University of Excellence status; application to be submitted by 10 December 2018 * Funding for the Clusters of Excellence begins 01 January 2019. Initial funding period: seven years. Another seven years are possible * Cluster of Excellence “The Politics of Inequality” – speaker: Professor Marius Busemeyer, Department of Politics and Public Administration; co-speakers: Professor Claudia Diehl, Department of History and Sociology; Professor Nils Weidmann, Department of Politics and Public Administration   uni.kn/research/inequality   * Cluster of Excellence “Centre of the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour” – co-speakers: Professor Iain Couzin, Department of Biology Professor Oliver Deussen, Department of Computer and Information Science; Professor Urs Fischbacher, Department of Economics   uni.kn/research/collective-behaviour   * The Excellence Strategy includes the two funding lines **Clusters of Excellence** and **Universities of Excellence** * Further information: uni.kn/excellence-strategy |

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