

PhD-Position – Research Assistant (m/f/d)

In the SynthImmune Excellence Cluster of Heidelberg University

BIOETHICS / MEDICAL ETHICS

(open also to researchers without background in the field)

42 months, 75%



The Institute for Medical and Data Ethics at the Faculty of Medicine, Heidelberg University, headed by Prof. Dr. med. Dr. phil. Eva Winkler, is seeking to fill a doctoral position as a research assistant (m/f/d) in the field of bioethics/medical ethics for the SynthImmune Excellence Cluster.

We are seeking a philosopher (preferably with bioethical, or biomedical background) to explore the ethical implications of bottom-up synthetic immunology.

Your focus will be to map the risks and benefits of bottom-up synthetic immunology engineering from a normative perspective — from personalized treatments to societal considerations such as long-term safety, equitable access, and public acceptance. You will develop a normative framework that supports responsible innovation.

Working closely with interdisciplinary partners in cutting-edge laboratory environments — and embedded in one of Germany's most research-active medical ethics institutes — you will combine qualitative empirical research with rigorous conceptual analysis of technological impacts and their broader social and ethical implications.

The Institute for Medical and Data Ethics, headed by Prof. Dr. med. Dr. phil. Eva Winkler, is located at Heidelberg University (Faculty of Medicine) which cooperates closely with the University Hospital Heidelberg, one of Germany's largest and leading university medical centers.

- Application deadline: **December 5, 2025**
- Start date: Immediately
- Field of activity: Research
- Type of employment: Part-time (75%)
- Type of Contract: Fixed-term (42 months – continued employment is possible)
- Salary Scale: TV-L 13
- Link to the official job posting on the SynthImmune Excellence Cluster job portal at Heidelberg University: <https://application.synthimmune.de> (the link may not work when clicked directly, but only via copy+paste)

Your tasks and prospects

- Ethical and conceptual analyses and evaluations
- Interdisciplinary work and communication
- Scientific research and literature analyses

- Scientific research and collaborative writing of scientific publications and other texts
- Project work, including formal aspects such as reporting

Your profile

- University degree in philosophy/medical ethics or similar subjects with above-average grades (at least a master's degree or equivalent)
- Knowledge of ethics is an advantage
- Basic knowledge in the field of applied ethics, bioethics, or medical ethics, or subject-specific prior knowledge in the field of empirical or qualitative research is an advantage
- Experience in (interdisciplinary) research and project work is an advantage
- Experience with scientific work and publishing is an advantage
- Ability to quickly familiarize yourself with topics and practical contexts as well as with the project
- Good English skills and very good written and spoken German skills; communication within the cluster is partly in English
- Organizational skills, initiative, ability to work independently and systematically
- Ability to work in a team
- Friendly and communicative attitude

What we offer

- Work on current societally and practically relevant moral issues in medical ethics in exchange with practitioners and national experts from various disciplines
- Flexible work with flexible working hours and optional home office hours
- Integration into the interdisciplinary Institute for Medical and Data Ethics with many opportunities for exchange
- Opportunity for long-term employment at the institute
- Integration into Heidelberg's very diverse, dynamic, and excellent research community; local and nationwide networking opportunities
- Opportunities for further training
- Salary according to TV-L 13
- Access to services offered by Heidelberg University, the University Hospital, and the state (job ticket; childcare in nurseries/kindergartens; subsidies for holiday childcare; university library; active health promotion; subsidies for company pension schemes)

Contact & Application

For further information, please contact PD Dr. Markus Herrmann by email (markus.herrmann@nct-heidelberg.de) or phone (06221-56 37 125).

Interested?

We look forward to receiving your application.

Please submit your application with the usual documents (cover letter, resume, references, etc.) by **December 5, 2025**. Applications can only be submitted via the official job portal of the SynthImmune Excellence Cluster. Please use the following link: <https://application.synthimmune.de>

There, select the application for the PhD position in the project: **100035 Normative Assessment of the Risks and Benefits of SynthImmune**. To do this, you must first register at the above link, complete your personal data, and finally create an application. Then, under the “Projects” tab, you can select the project “100035 Normative Assessment of the Risks and Benefits of SynthImmune.”

We are committed to equality of opportunities. Severely disabled persons will be given priority if they are equally qualified. The University Medical Center strives to increase the percentage of women in all areas and positions in which women are underrepresented. Qualified women are therefore particularly encouraged to apply. Full-time positions are generally divisible, unless there are official or legal reasons to the contrary.