



## **Guidelines on Application on Postdoctoral Research Grant**

With a purpose to develop and diversify Estonian research potential through scientific mobility and exchange of experience, and thereby to activate international exchange of knowledge and support the development of careers of young researchers, the Estonian Science Foundation (hereinafter referred to as the “Foundation”) announces an application for postdoctoral research grant. Starting from 2009, in case of existence of the respective financial source, postdoctoral grants can be applied for twice a year. With the grants, financed with a support of the European Social Fund (ESF), the researchers are enabled to blend in with the academic world by continuing the work in their field of science in a new research and development institution. With the grants diversifying of competence of researcher by exchanging experience is also supported. That enables the young researcher to continue their career as a scientist in the field of research and development and to diversify their competence by exchanging experience. Issuing postdoctoral research grants is a contribution to the coherence between the scientists and Estonian research and development institutions.

The conditions of guidelines on application of postdoctoral grant have been prepared on the basis of “Guidelines on Application of Postdoctoral Grants” which have been approved on 18.09.2007 by the Council of the Foundation and are in conformity with the researcher mobility programme “Mobilitas” (hereinafter referred to as “programme “Mobilitas””) of the measure “Preferential development of key areas of research and development, innovation strategy and educational science” of priority axis “Development of the Human Resources of Research and Development Activities” of “Operational Programme for Human Resource Development”. The issuing of grants fulfils the objectives of Estonian research and development and innovation strategy “Knowledge-based Estonia 2007–2013” (hereinafter referred to as RD&I strategy) and Estonian higher education strategy 2006–2015. The implementing institution of programme “Mobilitas” is the Ministry of Education and Research (hereinafter referred to as the “implementing institution”) the implementing agency is Archimedes Foundation (hereinafter referred to as “implementing agency”) and it is carried out by the Foundation.

Postdoctoral research grant is a financial support that the Foundation will award to an applicant on the basis of the results of a public international call for proposals for the purpose of implementation of a particular research project. Upon issuing the postdoctoral research grant, the

postdoctoral researchers coming from abroad to Estonia and starting to work at Estonian research and development institutions will be preferred. It is also possible to be awarded a grant for going from Estonia to a research and development institution of a foreign state and an inter-Estonian postdoctoral research grant. The aim of postdoctoral studies abroad is to implement the acquired knowledge in Estonia. The amount of inter-Estonian grants will be no more than 10% out of all grants. Pursuant conditions of these guidelines, the postdoctoral research grant may contain remuneration for the postdoctoral researcher, research expenses, a one-time relocation allowance and overhead costs. The duration of a postdoctoral grant is either two or three years. Upon use of a postdoctoral grant and reporting one has to be guided by the programme “Mobilitas” and the Structural Assistance Act for the Period of 2007–2013.

### **1. Requirements to the applicant of the postdoctoral research grant**

- 1.1. Subject to approval of the partner institution<sup>1</sup>, the postdoctoral research grant may be applied for by a person who has been awarded a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification not earlier than five years before the postdoctoral research grant being is applied for and who has not been awarded the doctoral degree by the same research and development institution (one university will be deemed to be one research and development institution) in which the person is applying for the position of a postdoctoral researcher. In case that, after obtaining the degree, a person applying for the position of a postdoctoral researcher was on parental leave or in compulsory military service, the qualification period is extended by the period of the parental leave or compulsory military service.
- 1.2. The topics of research projects will not be prescribed regarding applications for grants meant for researchers coming from abroad to Estonia and inter-Estonian grants. Grants given to a postdoctoral researcher going abroad will only be financed if the research is subject to preferably developed fields of RD&I strategy<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3. A person applying for a postdoctoral research grant to go from Estonia to a foreign state has to have worked in Estonia for at least one year in a row after being awarded of a doctoral degree or the equivalent qualification and before the beginning of acceptance of postdoctoral research grant applications.
- 1.4. A postdoctoral researcher is obliged to publish at least one peer-reviewed science publication.
- 1.5. A person applying for a grant to go abroad will take contractual obligation, after completing the grant, to apply for a position in the partner institution which is connected to the researcher’s area of specialisation and qualifications, and will be obliged to work there for at least three years. If the recipient of grant will not perform the obligations assumed with acceptance of the grant, he or she and/or the partner institution may be required to refund the

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Concerning postdoctoral research grants, the research and development institutions in the register of Estonian Research Information System which are positively evaluated in the respective field of research and development pursuant to the July 30, 2004 Regulation of the Government of the Republic no. 259 “Conditions and Policies of Evaluation of Research and Development Institutions” will be involved as partner institutions. In case of postdoctoral researcher working in Estonia, the receiving Estonian research and development institution will be the partner institution. In case of a postdoctoral researcher going abroad, the partner institution will be the Estonian research and development institution sending the postdoctoral researcher to a foreign state.

<sup>2</sup> The first priority areas of Estonian research and development and innovation strategy 2007–2013 “Knowledge-based Estonia” are information and communication technology, material technology, biotechnology, energy, environment technology and health (programme “Mobilitas”, p. 3).

grant either partly or fully, unless the failure to perform obligations arose from medical or family reasons or reasons independent of the postdoctoral researcher and the partner institution.

- 1.6. If the partner institution is not able to offer a position which is equivalent to the researcher's area of specialisation and qualifications, then the postdoctoral researcher will have the right to get a job in Estonia in an institution of his or her choice.

## **2. Requirements to partner institutions and supervisors of postdoctoral researchers**

2.1. The Foundation will conclude an agreement on partnership with a partner institution which regulates the activities of the parties upon carrying out the programme "Mobilitas" and which contains the mutual rights, obligations and liabilities of the parties. The agreement on partnership will be concluded as a single agreement and it applies for all research grants awarded from the finances of the mobility programme "Mobilitas" where this research and development institution has been involved.

2.2. An institution receiving the postdoctoral researcher will provide a necessary working environment (incl. working space, administrative and support structure etc.) and supervisor to the postdoctoral researcher.

2.3. The supervisor of a postdoctoral researcher may be a holder of a large-scale research project (i.e. at least with the same value as the postdoctoral research grant applied for) or a main executor assigned by a holder of a large-scale project.

2.4. The Foundation has the right to request for additional documents from the research and development institution where a postdoctoral research grant is applied for regarding the respective research area.

## **3. Amount of the postdoctoral research grant**

3.1. For remuneration and taxes payable thereon there is 300 000 EEK (19 173 EUR) per year.

3.2. To cover research costs, 90 000 EEK (5 752 EUR) per year will be paid in experimental science disciplines and 50 000 EEK (3 196 EUR) per year in non-experimental science disciplines.

3.3. A partner institution will be compensated for up to 5% of overhead costs related to the postdoctoral research grant of the costs indicated in clauses 3.1 and 3.2.

3.4. The postdoctoral researchers whose employment entails relocation from one country to another will receive a one-time relocation allowance in the sum of 400 000 EEK (25 565 EUR). The relocation allowance will be paid to the postdoctoral researchers who have not resided or worked (incl. studied) in the country of destination longer than six months during the three years preceding the date of submission of the application. The Foundation is entitled to require an applicant to submit relevant supporting evidence. The relocation allowance is paid as a single payment. The taxes prescribed by Estonian law shall apply to the relocation allowance.

## **4. Procedure for applying for the post doctoral research grant**

4.1. The Foundation will organise the acceptance of applications for postdoctoral research grants and will also determine the requirements for acceptance of applications. The Foundation will arrange the evaluation of applications and will finance the successful projects pursuant to the decision of the Council of the Foundation.

4.2. According to these guidelines, applications for postdoctoral grant will be accepted until March 16, 2009 (included). An application has to be submitted in English.

4.3. An application and its appendices for a postdoctoral research have to be submitted electronically in pdf format as well as on paper (with an original signature) by deadline. Electronically the documents have to be sent to [etf@etf.ee](mailto:etf@etf.ee). On paper an application and its appendices have to be sent by mail or brought at Estonian Science Foundation, Endla 4, 10142 Tallinn, Estonia.

4.4. The application for a postdoctoral research grant has to contain the following parts:

- the application form containing general data of the applicant, (incl. the supervisor and his or her research project) and an annotation of the research project (up to 2 000 characters);
- a scientific description of the postdoctoral researcher's project (with a line space of 1, in font Times New Roman, with a font size of 12 and up to 6 pages) providing an overview of the theoretical background of the intended research as well as references to what has been done so far, major goals and working hypotheses of the project, the research methodology, the equipment to be used and literature cited. The connection between the proposed project with the research of the postdoctoral researcher's supervisor must be specified separately; A person applying for a grant to go abroad will be obliged to write a vision of his/her future research work in Estonia.
- the CV of the applicant containing references to publications;
- the CV of the supervisor containing major publications of the last five years;
- regarding an applicant going from Estonia to a foreign state, an invitation or a written confirmation from the receiving research and development institution.

4.5. If during the project human research, animal testing or other tests, for which an approval of the ethics committee of the country of destination is needed, are carried out, then a positive decision concerning the project, addressed to the Foundation by the human research ethics committee or the approvals committee for animal tests or an organisation which requires some other approval, must be enclosed to the application.

4.6. The postdoctoral researchers who have been awarded a grant as a result of application for a grant on the basis of these guidelines, have to commence work no later than on October 31, 2009.

## **5. Acceptance of applications for a postdoctoral research grant**

5.1. Applications submitted after the due date and applications which do not meet the requirements of the guidelines will not be accepted.

5.2. If an application or an applicant fails to meet the requirements, then the applicant will be notified of that within ten days after the due date for submission of applications. The applicants whose applications have arrived at the Foundation after the due date will be notified within five days after the arrival of the application.

5.3. Each application will be assigned an identification code which will remain the same throughout the duration of the grant. Applications will be maintained in the databases of the Foundation.

## **6. Criteria for evaluation of applications for the postdoctoral research grant and procedure for expert assessment**

6.1. An application for the grant will be given for evaluation to at least two independent reviewers with a doctoral degree or an equivalent academic degree, of whom at least one is from a foreign country. No other reviews or opinions addressed to the Foundation will be taken into account.

6.2. Applications for the grant will be reviewed and a general evaluation concerning the applications will be rendered by an evaluation committee formed by the Foundation which includes representatives from all research fields to which the applications pertain, and representatives from the implementing institution as well as ministries and other organizations. The composition of the committee will be made public at the web page of the Foundation after the making of financing decision.

6.3. Members of the committee as well as reviewers are obliged to comply with the guidelines of evaluation of grant applications and the rules of procedure concerning conflicts of interest approved by the Council of the Foundation which have been made public on the web page of the Foundation. Evaluation Committee has the right to consult the competent institutions (the Research and Development Council, the Academy of Sciences etc) as well as partner institutions.

6.4. Both applications and reviews will be confidential. Members of the evaluation committee and the reviewers will not be allowed to disclose information contained in applications or use it for the benefit of themselves or of any other persons or to detriment of any persons.

6.5. The committee will compile a ranking list of applications on the basis of general evaluations and the reviewers' opinions and submit to the Council of the Foundation for decision making. There is a single ranking list for all postdoctoral researchers.

6.6. The Council of the Foundation will make its decision to finance/refuse to finance an application on the basis of the ranking list and recommendations received from the committee. A decision of the Council will be final.

6.7. The applicant will be notified of the results of evaluation of applications in writing by no later than the end of June of 2009. Each applicant will receive a notice regarding the decision of the Council and the reviews of his or her application. The names of the reviewers will not be disclosed.

6.8. All materials relating to the evaluation of application will be confidential until the adoption of financing decisions by the Council. Projects to be financed will be disclosed at the web page of the Foundation. Applications not granted by the Foundation will be confidential until the end of term of archiving on December 31, 2025.

## **7. Grant agreement**

7.1. With regard to each grant a trilateral grant agreement between the Foundation, a partner institution and a postdoctoral researcher will be concluded for the term of the grant.

7.2. The agreement will establish mutual rights, obligations and liabilities of the parties, including the remuneration payable to the postdoctoral researcher and the term of the employment contract.

7.3. The postdoctoral researcher with a 2- year grant has a possibility to extend his or her grant for the period of one year. The respective application with a substantive interim report (up to 5 pages) will be submitted to the Foundation three months before the termination of the 2-year contract. The decision of extending a grant will be made by the Council of the Foundation on the basis of successfulness of the postdoctoral researcher's work and existence of financial means.

## **8. Use of postdoctoral research grant**

8.1. The costs incurred upon use of a postdoctoral grant are eligible if they are directly related to the activities of the programme "Mobilitas" and comply with the conditions of eligibility of the programme "Mobilitas" and the "Terms and procedure for designating period 2007-2013 structural assistance expenses eligible or ineligible"

8.2. The Foundation will compensate for the eligible expenditures of the postdoctoral research grant to the partner institution in respect to eligible costs on the basis of payment claims approved by the implementing agency.

8.3. The procedure and deadlines for submitting summary tables and expense receipts will be established in a partnership agreement.

8.4. Arrangements for using the grant for research expenses will be made by the postdoctoral researcher in cooperation with his or her supervisor. A postdoctoral researcher and the partner institution will be liable for purposeful and proper use of the grant and for purposeful process of the planned research project.

## **9. Reporting on the postdoctoral research grant**

9.1. A postdoctoral researcher will submit the annual reports, activity reports and interim reports of using the grant to the Foundation pursuant to the procedure and deadlines stipulated in the grant agreement.

9.2. The partner institution takes part in compilation of activity reports of the programme “Mobilitas” pursuant to the procedure and deadlines stipulated in the agreement on partnership.

9.3. In the case that the results of research are published, a notation must be added to the publication (article, books, website etc.) specifying that the research was carried out with the financial support of the European Social Fund and indicating the number of the grant.

9.4. A substantive interim report will only be submitted by the postdoctoral researchers to whom a two-year grant was awarded and who want to apply for an extension for a period of one year. In this case the interim report will have to be submitted three months before the final deadline of the two-year grant.

9.5. The final report of the postdoctoral research grant will be submitted within one month after termination of the grant. The final report of the postdoctoral research grant includes a substantive research report and a grant use report.

9.6. The final report will be given to an independent reviewer for evaluation. The final report will be approved by the Council of the Foundation.

## **10. Criteria for evaluation of applications for a postdoctoral research grant**

10.1. Upon evaluation of applications for a postdoctoral grant the experts and the evaluation committee are obliged to take the following main criteria for evaluation into account:

- Scientific quality and innovativeness of the proposed research project;
- Competence of the postdoctoral researcher;
- Evaluation of the research project on the basis of choosing criteria of “Operational Programme for Human Resource Development” priority axis “Development of the Human Resources of Research and Development Activities”.