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Approved by the Council of
Estonian Science Foundation

Guidelines on Applying for Postdoctoral Research Grant

With a purpose to develop and diversify Estonian research potential through the mobility of researchers 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 a call for postdoctoral research grant applications. With the grants, financed with a support of the FP7 Marie Curie COFUND the “People” Programme the researchers are enabled to blend in with the academic world by continuing the work in their field of science in Estonian research and development institution.

The post-doctoral research grant is a research grant that the Foundation will award to an applicant as a result of an open international competition for the purpose of implementation of a particular research project, which includes the remuneration of the post-doctoral researcher in question (incl. taxes payable thereon), research costs, a one-time relocation support and overhead. The Foundation will not prescribe the topics of research projects. The duration of a post-doctoral research grant is either two or three years. A notice of opening of the competition will be published on the websites of the Foundation (www.etf.ee), the Estonian Research Portal (www.etis.ee), the [European Researcher’s Mobility Portal \(http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess\)](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess), and in an international science magazine.

1. Requirements concerning applicants for the post-doctoral research grant.

1.1. Subject to the approval of the receiving institution, the post-doctoral research grant can be applied for by a person who has been awarded a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification not earlier than 2007 and who has not been awarded the doctoral degree by the same R&D institution (in the case of universities – by the same faculty) in which the person is applying for the position of a post-doctoral researcher. In the case that, after obtaining the degree, a person applying for the position of a post-doctoral researcher was on parental leave or in compulsory military service, the period of qualification is extended by the period of the parental leave or compulsory military service.

1.2. A person may apply for the post-doctoral research grant if he/she has not resided or worked (incl. studied) in Estonia longer than 12 months during the three years preceding the date of submission of the application.

2. Requirements concerning host institutions receiving post-doctoral researchers.

2.1. A person may apply for the post-doctoral research grant in order to assume a researcher's position in positively evaluated Estonian R&D institution (hereinafter referred to as Host Institution) in the relevant R&D sphere.

2.2. The Host Institution receiving a post-doctoral researcher must sign an agreement with the Foundation following the award of the grant, which determines the terms and conditions of the grant. The Host Institution will have to ensure a working environment suitable for completing the project and the existence of a proficient supervisor for the post-doctoral researcher.

2.3. The supervisor of a post-doctoral researcher should be a holder or a main participant of a large-scale research project (i.e. a project of an annual financial volume that is at least equal to the post-doctoral research grant being applied for).

2.4. The Foundation is entitled to require the Host Institution for submitting additional documents concerning the relevant research topic (e.g. copy of a relevant agreement).

3. Amount of the post-doctoral research grant.

3.1. An amount of EUR 25 600 per year has been envisaged for remuneration and taxes payable thereon.

3.2. To cover research costs, EUR 5760 per year will be paid in experimental science disciplines and EUR 3200 per year in non-experimental science disciplines.

3.3. A fee for overhead charges equal to 5% of the amounts specified in clauses 3.1 and 3.2 above will be paid to receiving institutions.

3.4. To the post-doctoral researchers whose employment entails relocation to Estonia from another country a non-recurrent relocation support of EUR 6500 will be paid. The relocation support will be paid to the post-doctoral researchers who have resided or worked (incl. studied) in Estonia for no longer than six months preceding the date of submission of the application. The Foundation is entitled to require an applicant to submit relevant supporting documents. The relocation allowance is paid as a single payment. The institution may in agreement with the post-doctoral researcher pay it for remuneration of relocation expenses as a single payment or as monthly additional payment. The taxes prescribed by Estonian law (incl. also social tax and unemployment insurance premium paid by employer) shall apply to the relocation allowance.

4. Procedure for applying for the post-doctoral research grant.

4.1. The Foundation will organise a competition for post-doctoral research grants and determine the terms and conditions of the competition. The Foundation arranges the evaluation of the applications and finances the successful projects pursuant to the decision of the Council of the Foundation.

4.2. According to these guidelines the applications for post-doctoral research grants will be accepted until 25th January 2012 at 16.00 Estonian time. An application is submitted in English.

4.3. An application for the post-doctoral research grant should be submitted electronically via the Estonian Research Portal (www.etis.ee). To submit an application via the Estonian Research Portal, one must register as a user of the system and follow the instructions given on the website. Also receiving institutions will approve and sign electronically the relevant applications via the Estonian Research Portal¹.

4.4. An application for the post-doctoral research grant consists of the following:

- the **application form** containing general data of the applicant and the receiving institution (incl. the supervisor, and the research topic) and an annotation of the research project (up to 2000 characters);
- a **scientific description** of the post-doctoral researcher's project (not more than 18 000 characters (with spaces), excluding cited publications) 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 and the equipment to be used, and literature cited. The connection between the proposed project with the research topic of the post-doctoral researcher's supervisor must be specified separately;
- the **CV of the applicant** containing references to major publications;
- the **CV of the supervisor** containing references to major publications during 2007-2011.

4.5. Where the application is completed in the Estonian Research Portal, a notation must be added on whether studies involving humans or tests involving animals will be conducted within the scope of the given project. If such studies or tests are planned, the positive decision concerning the project, addressed to the Foundation by the human research ethics committee or the approvals committee for animal tests, as the case may be, must be added to the application.

4.6. The postdoctoral researchers who have been awarded a grant as a result of the application round on the basis of these guidelines will commence work no later than October 2012, unless, with good reason, agreed otherwise.

5. Processing of applications for the post-doctoral research grant.

5.1. Processing the applications for the postdoctoral researcher grant complies with the guidelines on processing the applications laid down in the Foundation.

5.2. Applications not submitted when due and not conforming to requirements will not be processed.

5.3. If an application or an applicant fails to meet the requirements, then the applicant will be notified of that within 20 workdays after the due date for submission of applications.

5.4. Each application will be assigned a unique identification code which will remain the same throughout the duration of the top researcher grant. Applications and all relevant documentation will be maintained in the databases of ETIS and the Foundation.

¹ The Host Institution will arrange for the access of persons, who have not been registered in the Estonian Research Portal by the moment of submitting the application, to the information system.

6. Criteria for evaluation of applications for the post-doctoral research grant and rules of expert assessment.

6.1. The guidelines and criteria for evaluation of applications are available on the website of the Foundation (www.etf.ee).

6.2. An application for the grant will be forwarded 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.

6.3. Applications and evaluations for the grant will be reviewed and a general evaluation concerning the applications will be rendered by an ad hoc committee formed by the Foundation which includes representatives from all research spheres to which the applications pertain.

6.4. Members of the committee as well as reviewers are obliged to comply with the rules of evaluation guidelines as well as the procedure concerning conflicts of interest approved by the Council of the Foundation (www.etf.ee).

6.5. Both applications and reviews will be confidential. 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 the detriment of any persons.

6.6. The committee will compile a ranking list of applications on the basis of reviewers' opinions and submit it to the Council of the Foundation that will make its decision.

6.7. 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.

6.8. Each applicant will be notified of the decision of the Council and receive reviews of his or her application during 10 workdays via the Estonian Research Portal. The names of reviewers will not be disclosed.

6.9. 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 in ETIS. Applications rejected by the Foundation will be confidential until the end of term of archiving.

7. Entry into 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, 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. For extending the grant the researcher will submit to Foundation 3 months before the end of the grant the interim report and for the next year on the work performed within the project and time schedule for next grant holding year. The Foundation will decide upon the extension of the grant according to the success of the work and funds available.

8. Use of the grant.

8.1. After the entry into the grant agreement the Foundation will start transfers of the grant to the current account of the institution that signed the grant agreement. The grant will be paid in instalments. Relocation support will be transferred in total sum with the first payment.

8.2. Arrangements for using the amounts reimbursed for research costs in connection with the grant will be made by the post-doctoral researcher in conjunction with the supervisor. A receiving institution will not be entitled to withhold any amounts transferred by the Foundation to its current account in connection with the grant. Post-doctoral researchers, their supervisors and the receiving institutions will be responsible for using the grants appropriately and for their intended purpose as well as for the consistent progress of research activities.

8.3. In the case that the results of research are published, a notation must be added to the publication (article, book, website) specifying that the research was carried out with the financial support of the ERMOS programme (Co-funded by Marie Curie Actions) and indicating the number of the grant.

9. Reporting on the post-doctoral research grant.

9.1. A postdoctoral researcher will submit the reports on the use of grant and research activities to the Foundation pursuant to the procedure and deadlines stipulated in the Grant Agreement.

9.2. The final report of the postdoctoral researcher grant will be submitted via ETIS according to the valid guidelines within 10 workdays after termination of the grant.

10. Criteria for Evaluation of Applications for a Postdoctoral Research Grant

10.1. Scientific quality and innovativeness of the planned research project

- Novelty of the project and the potential for the creation of new knowledge;
- Relevance of the research topic and contribution of the expected results to the development of science, technology and/or social sphere;
- Degree of elaboration of the project plan and validity of the methodology to be used and the quality of the project implementation plan.

10.2. Competence of the postdoctoral researcher

- Quality and results of the applicant's previous research activities, and the capacity of the applicant to carry out the proposed project;
- Experience of the applicant in (international) research-related cooperation and his or her teamwork skills;
- Potential contribution of the applicant to the research activities carried out in the receiving institution, training aspects of the proposal and impact of the project on his/her research career.

10.3. Overall evaluation. (Not based on the mathematical average of the above ratings.)

