

Frequently asked questions from candidates in the START programme

1. If I plan to leave for a fellowship at a foreign research centre, can I apply for a START stipend?

Yes, if the stipendee maintains an affiliation with a research institution in Poland, he or she may also carry out research at a foreign institution in the form of a fellowship.

Research may be conducted by stipendees during the term of the START stipend agreement at any place, in Poland or abroad, also in the form of a fellowship or stipend at other scientific institutions. What is essential from the Foundation's perspective is the candidate/stipendee's affiliation with a Polish entity whose statutory aim is conducting scientific research at the Polish entity.

2. I received a grant from the National Science Centre (NCN). Can I apply for a START stipend and potentially receive two stipends at the same time?

The rules for the START programme contain no provisions preventing or prohibiting a Stipendee from receiving any other stipend during the period of receiving the START stipend. The programme rules indicate that the stipend is awarded to recognize the scientific accomplishment to date by young researchers and to provide an incentive for further development—not to limit their opportunities for scientific development. To receive a stipend in the START programme, the stipendee is only required to comply with the obligations sets forth in §7 of the rules and in the agreement. Neither of these documents contains any reservation on receiving other stipends, or receiving other funding, and thus there is nothing preventing a START programme stipendee from simultaneously receiving funding awarded under another programme.

3. If I was born on 11 February 1994, can I apply for a START stipend, since the application deadline is in October?

The specific month and day of the candidate's birth is irrelevant—only the year of birth counts. Persons born in 1994 or later (regardless of the month and day) can apply for a START stipend without resorting to the age extension clause.

Persons born prior to 1994 may take part in the competition only if they are entitled to an age extension in accordance with the START programme rules.

4. A few days ago I defended my doctorate, but the competition for the position I am interested in will not be held for another month. As I am not yet employed at the university, can I apply for a START stipend?

At the end of September I ended the fourth year of my doctoral studies and formally ceased to be a doctoral student at the university, but I have not yet obtained the academic degree of PhD, and my doctoral defence is scheduled for six months from now. Can I apply for a START stipend?

I have submitted my doctoral dissertation and have therefore lost my status as a doctoral student. I am now waiting for my defense, after which I will apply for a position that will allow me to continue my scientific work. Can I apply for a START scholarship?

You can take part in the competition if the rector or prorector regards you as a person affiliated with the university and signs your stipend application. In that case the rector may rely on the statement or opinion of your academic adviser concerning the conduct of your research. What is binding for the Foundation is signing of the application by the applicant, i.e. by the rector or prorector of the institution.

5. In the START stipend, does the research plan for the next year have to do with academic year 2024/2025, or calendar year 2025, or should I interpret it to mean one year from receipt of the stipend?

The research plan refers to calendar year 2025, but note that we do not require a work schedule, only a general plan for the candidate's research work in the immediate future.

6. Can I include drawings or graphs in the description of the research achievement or in the list of planned research? Can I possibly use an 11-point font?

You can enclose graphs and drawings. We will also accept an 11-point font.

7. In the description of the research achievement, can the list of literature run over to the 3rd page, or must it all fit within two A4 pages?

Yes, the list of literature and references to your own publications can go on the 3rd page.

8. Can I enclose the text of a work that has not been published yet?

Yes, on condition that you enclose confirmation of acceptance for publication along with other attachments submitted electronically.

9. Can the list of publications contain only patents, or also patent applications?

The list of publications may contain only patents, but information about patent applications may be included in the enclosure *Description of research achievement*.

10. Can a survey article (with an impact factor) be included in the list of publications? Or can only original research works be included?

Survey works may also be included if the candidate does not have significant original works, or if the survey work is important to the candidate's work, for example is published in a good journal.

11. I have a lot of publications and I would like to present them in the application. How can I do that?

The Foundation requires the candidates to choose and enclose **full texts to a maximum of three works** (publications, patents, or conference papers), as well a **list of up to the five most important publications**. Please do not enclose a full list of publications to the candidate's CV or any other attachment, as it would be a violation of the START programme regulations.

12. I am currently a doctoral student at a university, but also work at an institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). Who in that case should be the applicant in the START competition? Is there some way in the system to declare this double affiliation? And in that situation should I submit opinions from scientific supervisors at both institutions?

It is not possible to declare a double affiliation, but it may be indicated in your CV. In such case the candidate has a choice. The applicant could be either the university (in which case it will be signed by the rector or prorector), or the PAN institute (in which case the application will be signed by the institute's director or authorized representative). Only one opinion of the candidate's scientific supervisor can be enclosed, and the scientific supervisor preparing the opinion will also sign the list of publications.

13. Can the scientific supervisor be an assistant academic adviser?

Yes.

14. I defended my doctorate last month. Can the scientific supervisor preparing an opinion be the academic adviser for my doctoral dissertation?

Yes.

15. Who should sign the application as my scientific supervisor if I have already completed my postdoctoral (habilitation) degree?

Then the application is signed by your immediate superior—the dean or director of the institute or department.

16. I would like to use the Outgoing Stipend to visit two different institutions. Should I prepare for them a joint description of the research visit (i.e. substantive justification), or in that situation can I prepare two separate, independent justifications?

You may prepare a single justification, which should include a justification for the visit to the two institutions and a justification for the selection of those specific institutions. However, if two separate justifications are enclosed, the application will still be accepted.

17. Can the application be signed by the dean as the applicant, instead of the rector or prorector?

If the rector of the university has issued authorization to the dean to sign applications, in signing the application they are acting on the rector or vice-rector's behalf, and in such instances an application signed by the dean as the applicant's representative will be accepted.

A copy of the power of attorney should be enclosed with the printed version of the application form and sent to the Foundation as a hardcopy so it is possible to verify the dean's authority.

18. Apart from the rector's signature, is the dean's signature and approval of the application required?

The Foundation does not require such approval, but before signing applications the rector may require confirmation by deans or directors of institutes at the university. The Foundation regards this as an issue of the internal regulations at the given institution.

19. Prior to submission of the application to the Foundation, is the consent of the faculty council required?

The Foundation does not require such consent.

20. What seals from the university should be placed on the application?

On hand-signed application form we require the individual named seal of the applicant, i.e. the rector or prorector. In the case of digital signature use, seal is not required. Handwritten and digital signatures cannot be combined within a single document.

21. Which of the attachments should be submitted in electronic form and which in hard copy?

All the attachments should be submitted in electronic form only. A signed and sealed (if hand-signed) copy of the application form needs to be sent to the Foundation, along with a power of attorney (if applicable). Applications signed with digital signatures do not require seals, but they have to be printed and sent to the Foundation as well.

22. Do I have to send a printed version of the application form if it has been signed electronically?

Yes, in that case a printed version of the application form and a power of attorney (if applicable) have to be sent to the Foundation.