

Rules for STIPENDS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS
in the START Programme of the Foundation for Polish Science

The Foundation for Polish Science (the “**Foundation**”) awards research stipends through an open competition to young researchers at the threshold of their career who can show successes they have already achieved in their field of inquiry. The stipends serve as recognition of young researchers’ achievements so far and encouragement for further growth.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 1

1. These rules (the “**Rules**”) sets forth the rules for applying for, award and realization of stipends for young researchers in the START programme.
2. A stipend in the START programme (“**START Stipend**”) is awarded for 12 months. The purpose of the START Stipend is to recognize the winners’ research achievements to date and support their scientific growth.
3. A START Stipend may be awarded only once.
4. In the START programme, the Foundation may award a supplementary research stipend for study trips (“**Outgoing Stipend**”) for a period totalling up to 4 weeks, to one or more foreign research centres. An Outgoing Stipend is not in the nature of a grant, but its purpose is to establish cooperation and to learn about the working methods at those centres.
5. An Outgoing Stipend to a research centre selected by the candidate may be awarded in the START programme only once.
6. Each year the Foundation earmarks up to PLN 4.5 million (four million five hundred thousand zloty) for realization of stipends in the START programme. This amount may increase each year by no more than 5%. In the annual allocation no more than 10% of these funds is earmarked for realization of Outgoing Stipends in the START programme.
7. The level of stipends in the START programme is established each year by the Executive Board of the Foundation. The maximum monthly amount of the stipend may not be greater than the average gross monthly wage in the enterprise sector for the year preceding announcement of the competition, as announced each year by the president of the Central Statistical Office (GUS).
8. The deadline for filing applications in the START programme and the anticipated date of resolution of the competition are announced each year on the Foundation’s website.

§ 2

1. A START Stipend may be sought by candidates who meet all of the following formal requirements:
 - a. They are doctoral students in Poland or are performing R&D work in Poland at an entity with conducting scientific research and development as one of its statutory purposes.
 - b. They can demonstrate documented scientific accomplishments.
 - c. They will not exceed age 30 during the year of filing of the application. This age may be extended in the following instances:
 - i. For birth or adoption of a child, the age is subject to extension in the case of women who have given birth to a child or persons how have adopted a child by 1 year for each child, regardless of the date of birth or adoption of the child.

- ii. Or, for an interruption in scientific work for a maximum of 2 years, where the age is subject to extension by all documented periods of interruptions in conducting scientific research lasting no less than 12 months in the case of seeking an extension by one year and no less than 24 months in the case of seeking an extension by two years.

Documented interruptions in scientific work shall mean *inter alia* unpaid leave, if the candidate did not conduct scientific research during that time, leave related to parenthood, leave caused by illness, work in the R&D sector without participating in scientific research, work in other sectors of the economy, etc.

The grounds for extension of age indicated above cannot be combined; it is possible to extend the age only on the basis of one of them, even if both of them occurred.

APPLICATION FOR START STIPEND

§ 3

1. The applicants in the competition may be educational institutions or institutions where the R&D work of candidates referred to in §2(1)(a) is performed. An application for a START Stipend filed in the competition must be signed in the case of a university by its rector or prorector, and in the case of another entity, by the director of the entity or an authorized representative.
2. Candidates taking part in the competition must file an application for a START Stipend at the headquarters of the Foundation, first completing the online form available at the Foundation's website.
3. After completing the electronic registration, candidates must print out the completed application and deliver it in a hard copy, together with the appropriate enclosures and signatures, to the Foundation's address, which will be deemed to be effective filing of the application.
4. An application for a START Stipend must be prepared based on the Instructions for Preparing Application and Realization of Stipends in the START Programme (the "**Instructions**") available at the Foundation's website.
5. The Instructions contain information about the manner of registration, preparation and submission of the application for a START Stipend to the Foundation, including also for an application for an Outgoing Stipend, and detailed requirements for specific enclosures. The Instructions also set forth the rules for realization of START Stipends and Outgoing Stipends.
6. Applications that are incomplete, do not meet the formal conditions for the competition or the requirements set forth in the Instructions, or are filed after the established deadline, will not be considered.
7. The following should be enclosed with the START Stipend application form:
 - a. Scientific CV of the candidate.
 - b. List of a maximum of 5 (five) selected documents from among the publications, patents or conference papers of national or international scope of which the candidate is the author or co-author. Works that are unpublished but have been accepted for publication may be included in the list of publications only if a confirming document from the publisher is enclosed.
 - c. Copies of a maximum of 3 (three) publications, patents or conference papers which the candidate regards as his or her most important scientific accomplishments.

- d. A description of the originality of the candidate's most important research accomplishment(s) referred to in par. 7(b).
 - e. An opinion from the candidate's academic adviser or the director of the research team in which the candidate works.
 - f. A description of the candidate's research plans for the next year.
 - g. In the case of candidates whose publication, patents or conference papers appeared under a previous name, a statement by the candidate concerning the name change.
 - h. In the case of candidates who are over age 30 in the year of filing of the application, a statement confirming interruptions in research work or a statement concerning birth or adoption of a child.
 - i. A statement by the applicant—rector/prorector in the case of a university, or the director of the entity educating the candidate or the director of the institution where the candidate's R&D work is conducted—that in the event of receiving the Stipend the entity will apply for all approvals of ethics committees or other permits required for conducting the relevant research, and will begin carrying out that research only after obtaining the relevant approvals and permits.
8. For filing false statements, the candidate/stipendee will be excluded from funding by the Foundation for a period of 5 years from the date of filing of such statements.
 9. An application for a START Stipend may be withdrawn at any stage of the competition procedure at the written request of the candidate or applicant.

APPLICATION FOR OUTGOING STIPEND

§ 4

1. Only candidates seeking a START Stipend may apply for an Outgoing Stipend.
2. Funding for an Outgoing Stipend may be awarded for a total period of up to 4 weeks, and its realization must end no later than 6 months following the end of receipt of the START Stipend.
3. The following must be enclosed with the application for an Outgoing Stipend:
 - a. A justification for the choice and need for the visit to the foreign centre, together with brief information about the nature of the planned visit.
 - b. Information about the selected foreign centre, with particular attention to the scientific accomplishments of the host (based on the person's scientific CV).
 - c. An invitation letter from a scientist at the foreign institution who will provide scientific guidance to the stipendee.

PROCEDURE AND RESOLUTION OF COMPETITION

§ 5

1. Applications filed in the competition shall undergo a formal evaluation by the programme coordinator.
2. Applications meeting all formal criteria and requirements set forth in these Rules and the Instructions will undergo a merits evaluation.
3. The basic criterion for evaluation of applications is the scientific excellence and originality of the candidates' scientific accomplishments, evaluated on the basis of the documents

enclosed with the application, i.e. §3(7)(a)–(e). The research plans for the upcoming year presented in the application, referred to in §3(7)(f), are also of vital importance.

4. The main criterion for award of a supplementary Outgoing Stipend is the substantive justification for the planned visit. The standing of the centre selected by the candidate and the originality of the accomplishments of the host inviting the candidate, who will provide scientific guidance to the stipendee, are also important. This evaluation is made on the basis of the documents enclosed with the application referred to in §4(3).
5. The first stage of the merits evaluation is a preliminary assessment of the applications by at least two experts, with attention to par. 3. The individual applications and their evaluations will be discussed at meetings of expert panels, as a result of which the applications deemed the best by the panel of experts will qualify for the next stage of the competition—evaluation by external reviewers.
6. The applications qualified for the next stage will be evaluated by at least three external reviewers, with attention to par. 3 and 4. The reviewer's opinion shall include in particular:
 - a. a point evaluation on a scale from 1 to 7 (the best applications in terms of merits criteria shall receive 7 points, the weakest 1 point), and
 - b. a rank based on an ordering of the applications from the best to the weakest.
7. Based on the opinions gathered at the specific stages of the merits evaluation, a selection of the winners shall be made by the Executive Board of the Foundation. The decision of the Executive Board shall be ratified by the Foundation Council.

§ 6

1. Experts and reviewers who are recognized scientific authorities are invited to participate in the process of the merits evaluation of applications in the START programme by the programme coordinator, applying the rules adopted by the Foundation for selection of experts participating in evaluation of applications filed in Foundation competitions.
2. The names of experts and reviewers are confidential. Opinions and evaluations gathered during the course of the competition procedure shall not be disclosed to third parties.
3. Decisions resolving the competition are final and not subject to any appeal.
4. All candidates will be notified whether they will receive or not receive a Stipend.
5. A list of the stipend recipients is published on the Foundation's website. The Foundation reserves the right to disseminate information about the results of the competition, including the research accomplishments of the stipendees, via the Internet and other media.

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

§ 7

1. The stipendee has the right to relinquish the awarded Stipend in whole or part.
2. The stipendee is required to:
 - a. Comply with the terms of the Agreement.
 - b. Comply with the Foundation's Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries, available on the Foundation's website.
 - c. Conduct research work during the period of receiving the Stipend.
 - d. Notify the Foundation of any change in status of a doctoral student, cessation or change of location of performance of R&D work or the place where the stipendee is pursuing doctoral studies.

- e. Include information in publications, papers and conference appearances arising or delivered during the period of receiving the Stipend, concerning award of the Stipend and financing of the Stipend by the Foundation, according to the wording specified in the Agreement.
- f. Submit to the Foundation a report on the stipendee's scientific activity during receipt of the START Stipend (in the form and time specified in the Agreement). The report must be certified by the stipendee's academic adviser or the director of the research team in which the stipendee is conducting R&D work. The report shall include more specifically a description of the status of realization and advancement of the R&D work declared in the application for the START Stipend, together with a list of scientific works arising during receipt of the Stipend, and shall be submitted within 90 days after the end of receipt of the START Stipend. The Foundation reserves the right to disseminate information contained in the report.
- g. In the case of stipendees awarded an Outgoing Stipend, submit to the Foundation a report on the scientific visit (in the form and time specified in the Agreement), and present confirmation by the stipendee's foreign scientific adviser that the visit was held. The report shall include more specifically the time and place of realization of the visit and a description of realization of the plan for the visit declared in the application for the Outgoing Stipend, and shall be filed within 60 days after realization of the Outgoing Stipend. The Foundation reserves the right to disseminate information contained in the report.

§ 8

1. The applicant is required to oversee the course of the stipendee's scientific work and notify the Foundation if the stipendee interrupts his or her doctoral studies or scientific work.
2. The applicant has a right to apply to the Foundation for amendment of the decision on award of the Stipend. Grounds justifying amendment of the decision shall include more specifically the stipendee's failure to comply with principles of scientific integrity, resignation from scientific work, interruption of doctoral studies, or long-term absence from Poland for non-scientific reasons.

§ 9

1. The Foundation undertakes to pay out the Stipend on the basis of the Agreement.
2. The Foundation reserves the right to amend the decision on award of the Stipend, in particular with respect to withholding, suspension, withdrawal or cessation of payout of further instalments, if the stipendee does not comply with the obligations set forth in these Rules and in the Agreement, does not comply with the Foundation's Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries, does not comply with principles of scientific integrity, or harms the reputation of the Foundation.

REALIZATION OF STIPEND

§ 10

1. Payment of the START Stipend and Outgoing Stipend shall be made solely on the basis of a trilateral Stipend Agreement (the "**Agreement**") concluded among the Foundation, the stipendee and the applicant.
2. The Agreement shall specify the conditions for payment and realization of the Stipend as well as the rights and obligations of each of the parties.
3. The Agreement shall set forth more specifically:
 - a. The title and number of the Agreement together with identification of the parties to the Agreement.

- b. The subject of the Agreement, together with a specification of the amount of the Stipend awarded and the manner in which it will be paid out.
- c. The obligations of the stipendee and the educational institution or institution where the stipendee's R&D work is conducted.
- d. Provisions concerning reporting by the stipendee.
- e. Provisions concerning the stipendee's obligation to inform the public of the fact of receiving the Stipend.
- f. Provisions concerning withholding, suspension, withdrawal or cessation of payout of the Stipend.
- g. Provisions concerning administration and processing of the stipendee's personal data.
- h. Enclosures to the Agreement, in particular forms for reports.

CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

§ 11

1. Upon entry into force of these Rules, the provisions set forth in the Rules for Stipends for Young Researchers in the START Programme of the Foundation for Polish Science adopted by Board Resolution No. 54/2008 of 19 March 2008 shall cease to be in force.
2. The procedure for competitions in which the call for applications was completed prior to the date of entry into force of these Rules shall be conducted in compliance with the Rules referred to in par. 1. The Rules referred to in par. 1 shall apply to Agreements concluded prior to the date of entry into force of these Rules.
3. Any amendments to these Rules shall be made in the same manner in which the Rules were adopted.
4. These Rules shall enter into force upon issuance of a decision by the Minister of Science and Higher Education approving the rules for award of stipends in the START programme.