

START Programme Rules:
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 a 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”) specify the rules for seeking, award and realisation of stipends for young researchers in the START programme.
2. A stipend in the START programme (“stipend”) is awarded for one year. The stipend may be awarded again for the following year. Candidates seeking a stipend for a second year must take part in the competition again. Moreover, they must meet all of the formal requirements for candidates seeking a stipend for the first year.
3. As part of the stipend, the Foundation may finance brief study trips for a total period of up to 4 weeks to one or two foreign research centres important for the given discipline for the purpose of establishing cooperation and learning about working methods at those centres.
4. Financing of a study trip to a foreign research centre of the candidate’s choice may be awarded only once.

§ 2

1. Candidates are eligible to seek a stipend if they meet all of the following conditions:
 - a. They hold a master’s degree.
 - b. They are scientific staff or doctoral students at a Polish institution of higher education or other Polish institution conducting scientific research as one of its statutory purposes.
 - c. They can demonstrate scientific achievement documented by publications in recognised scholarly periodicals.
 - d. In the year of filing their application they will not be above age 30, or 32 in the case of candidates who have taken maternity leave or childrearing leave. Female candidates who will not be above age 32 in the year of filing their application shall also retain the right to seek a stipend if they were not employed at the time of birth and raising the child.

APPLICATION FOR STIPEND

§ 3

1. Applicants in the competition may only be institutions educating or employing candidates for a stipend referred to in §2(1)(b). An application for a stipend submitted in the competition must be signed by the rector or prorector of the institution, and in the case of a research institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences or other research unit educating or employing the candidate, by its director.

2. Candidates taking part in the competition must file an application for a stipend at the headquarters of the Foundation on the appropriate form, available at the Foundation's website.
3. After completing registration electronically, candidates must print out the registration form and deliver it in paper form to the address of the Foundation together with the relevant enclosures, which shall be treated as effective submission of the application.
4. The application for a stipend must be prepared on the basis of the *Instructions for Preparing Applications and Realisation of Stipends in the START Programme* (the "Instructions") available at the Foundation's website.
5. The Instructions contain information on the method of registration, preparation and transmission of the application for a stipend to the Foundation and detailed requirements concerning specific enclosures. The rules for realisation of stipends, including study trips, are set forth in the Instructions.
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 designated deadline will not be considered.
7. The following enclosures must be submitted with the application form:
 - a. The candidate's curriculum vitae (CV).
 - b. A photocopy of the diploma documenting the candidate's completion of higher education, certified at the secretariat of the institution employing or educating the candidate.
 - c. A list of the candidate's publications of national or international scope, excluding conference reports. Works accepted for publication may be included in the list of publications only if a document from the publisher is enclosed confirming acceptance of the work for publication. Detailed requirements for the list of publications are set forth in the Instructions.
 - d. Three publications (in the form specified in the Instructions) which the candidate regards as his or her most significant scientific accomplishments.
 - e. A description of the candidate's scientific work to date.
 - f. A description of the candidate's scientific plans for the next year.
 - g. An opinion from the candidate's academic adviser or the director of the research team in which the candidate is working.
 - h. In the case of candidates who have changed their surname after obtaining the diploma documenting their completion of a higher education, as well as those whose publications appeared under a previous surname, a copy of the document confirming such change.
 - i. In the case of female candidates who will be over age 30 in the year of filing the application, a document confirming that they have taken maternity leave or childrearing leave.
 - j. In the case of female candidates who will be over age 30 in the year of filing the application and have not taken maternity leave or childrearing leave, the child's birth certificate.
 - k. In the case of clinical trials, the approval or permit required by applicable regulations.
 - l. In the case of research necessitating experiments on animals, the approval of the relevant ethics commission required under regulations on experiments on animals.
 - m. In the case of research on protected species of plants, animals or fungi or in protected areas, the approval or permit required under regulations on protection of nature.

- n. In the case of research on genetically modified organisms or using such organisms, a statement by the director of the research unit where the research is conducted that the approval required under regulations on genetically modified organisms has been obtained.
8. The deadline for submission of applications for the competition is stated each year by the Foundation in the Programme for support of science for the given year, as well as on the Foundation's website.
9. An application for a stipend may be withdrawn at any stage of the competition procedure at the written request of the candidate or the applicant.

STUDY TRIPS AS PART OF THE STIPEND

§ 4

1. Candidates seeking a stipend may apply for financing as part of the stipend of a study trip to one or two foreign research centres of their choice. Such trips are designed for forming cooperation and learning about the research methods followed at those centres.
2. Candidates seeking financing for study trips must enclose the following with their START programme application:
 - a. Information about the planned trip (using the special form provided at the Foundation's website).
 - b. Information about the person inviting the candidate abroad, with particular attention to their scientific achievement.
 - c. Invitation letter from the scientist at the foreign institution the candidate intends to visit.
 - d. A justification for the choice and the need for the trip to the foreign centre.
3. The conditions for realisation and financing of the study trip are set forth in detail in the stipend agreement.

STIPEND FOR SECOND YEAR

§ 5

1. Holders of stipends in the START programme may seek a stipend for a second year if they meet all of the formal conditions applicable to candidates seeking a stipend for the first year.
2. Award of a stipend for a second year may be sought only once, in the year immediately following receipt of the stipend for the first year.
3. A condition for seeking a stipend for a second year is submission of an application for a stipend in the START programme competition together with the enclosures listed in §3(7) of the Rules. All formal requirements concerning candidates seeking a stipend for the first year shall remain in legal force in the case of stipend holders seeking a stipend for a second year.
4. The description of the scientific work to date should devote particular attention to a description of the research work carried out in the first year of receiving a stipend, the scientific accomplishments during this period, and the degree of realisation of the research plans presented in the application for the first year.
5. An application for a stipend may be withdrawn at any stage of the competition procedure at the written request of the candidate or the applicant.

RESOLUTION OF COMPETITION

§ 6

1. Applications submitted in the competition meeting all of the formal criteria and the requirements set forth in these Rules and in the Instructions will undergo a substantive evaluation, which will be performed by reviewers who are recognised scientific authorities.
2. The names of the reviewers are confidential. No evaluations gathered in the course of the competition procedure shall be disclosed to third parties.
3. The fundamental criterion for evaluation of the applications is the scientific quality and originality of the candidates' published scientific accomplishments. The research conducted so far by the candidates as well as the research plans for the next year presented in the application are also of vital significance.
4. The main criterion for awarding financing for study trips as part of the stipend is the standing of the centre selected by the candidate and the scientific potential of its personnel, and particularly the person inviting the candidate. The assessment of the appropriateness of the selection of the centre for the candidate's research topic is also important.
5. In the case of candidates seeking a stipend for a second year, in addition to scientific achievement the main criteria for evaluation are the new research accomplishments and the course of scientific work during receipt of the stipend in the first year.

§ 7

1. Stipends are awarded by the Board of the Foundation and approved by the Council of the Foundation.
2. The deadline for resolution of the competition is announced each year on the Foundation's website.
3. Decisions resolving the competition are final and not subject to any appeal.
4. Written notice of the results of the competition will be sent to all candidates and applicants.
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 stipend holders, via the internet and other media.

REALISATION OF STIPEND

§ 8

1. The stipend shall be paid out solely on the basis of a tripartite stipend agreement ("agreement") between the Foundation, the stipend holder, and the applicant. The agreement will specify the conditions for paying out and realising the stipend, as well as the rights and obligations of each of the parties.
2. The amount of the stipends is determined each year by the Board of the Foundation.

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

§ 9

1. The stipend winner has the right to relinquish the awarded stipend in whole or part. Relinquishing the stipend does not prevent the stipend winner from participating in competitions in later years, so long as the candidate meets the formal requirements.
2. Relinquishing the entire stipend for fortuitous reasons shall not prevent seeking a stipend again for the first or second year. If the stipend is relinquished for other reasons, the stipend winner may apply for the stipend again only for one year.
3. Relinquishing part of the stipend for fortuitous reasons shall not prevent seeking a stipend again, but only for one year. If the stipend is relinquished for other reasons, the stipend winner cannot enter the competition for the stipend again.
2. The stipend holder is required to:
 - a. comply with the terms of the agreement;
 - b. conduct scientific work during the period of receiving the stipend;
 - c. notify the Foundation of any change in status as an employee and/or doctoral student and of any change in the place where he or she is employed and/or pursuing doctoral studies;
 - d. include information in publications and reports arising during the period of receiving the stipend concerning awarding of the stipend from the Foundation, in a form specified in the stipend agreement;
 - e. submit a report to the Foundation on his or her scientific activity while receiving the stipend, in a form required by the Foundation. The report must be certified by the stipend holder's academic adviser or the head of the research team in which the stipend holder works. The Foundation reserves the right to disseminate the information contained in the report;
 - f. in the case of stipend holders awarded financing for study trips, to include in the report also a report on the study trip (in the form required by the Foundation) and to present confirmation from the stipend holder's foreign mentor that the study trip was conducted;
 - g. in the case of stipend holders seeking a stipend for a second year, to submit a report to the Foundation on the first year of realisation of the stipend.
3. The obligations referred to in par. 2 above shall apply to all stipend holders, including those receiving a stipend for the second year.

§ 10

1. The applicant is required to oversee the course of the stipend holder's scientific work and notify the Foundation if the stipend holder interrupts his or her doctoral studies or scientific work.
2. The applicant has a right to apply to the Foundation for modification of the decision awarding the stipend. Grounds justifying modification of the decision shall include more specifically: the stipend holder'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.

§ 11

1. The Foundation undertakes to pay out the stipend on the basis of the agreement.
2. The Foundation reserves the right to modify the decision on award of the stipend or withdraw from or cease paying out further instalments of the stipend if the stipend holder

fails to comply with his or her obligations set forth in these Rules or in the agreement, fails to comply with principles of scientific integrity, or injures the reputation of the Foundation.

CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

§ 12

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. 18/2006 of 18 January 2006 shall cease to be in force, except for the provisions referred to in par. 2 below in the scope set forth therein.
2. Realisation of stipends awarded in competitions resolved prior to the date of entry into force of these Rules shall be conducted in compliance with the Rules referred to in par. 1 above. The Rules referred to in par. 1 above 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 awarding stipends in the START programme.