

Frequently asked questions

1. If I am planning a research stay at a foreign research institution, can I apply for an FNP START scholarship?

Yes, provided that you maintain an affiliation with a Polish research institution/an institution whose statutory purposes include R&D activities, you may also carry out research at a foreign institution, including as part of a research stay.

During the term of the FNP START agreement, you may conduct your research anywhere, either in Poland or abroad, including during research stays or while receiving other fellowships or scholarships at other institutions.

From our perspective, the key requirement is that you remain affiliated with a Polish institution whose statutory purposes include conducting research/R&D activities.

2. I have received a grant from the National Science Centre (NCN). Can I still apply for an FNP START scholarship and, if successful, receive both at the same time?

Yes. The FNP START rules do not contain any provisions that would prevent or prohibit FNP START scholarship holders from receiving another scholarship at the same time.

The rules clearly state that the FNP START scholarship is awarded in recognition of the achievements of young researchers to date and is intended to encourage their further development.

3. If I was born on 11 February 1996, can I apply for an FNP START scholarship even though the application deadline is in October?

The candidate's exact date of birth is not relevant. Only the year of birth is taken into account.

Candidates born in 1996 or later, regardless of the month or day of birth, may apply for a scholarship without the need for an extension of the age limit.

Candidates born before 1996 may take part in the competition only if they meet the eligibility criteria for an extension of the age limit, in accordance with the FNP START rules.

4. I recently defended my doctoral dissertation, but the recruitment process for the position I am interested in will not take place for another month, so I am not currently employed by any research institution. Can I apply for an FNP START scholarship?

At the end of September, I completed the final year of my doctoral programme and lost the PhD candidate status, but I have not yet obtained my doctoral degree. The defence is scheduled for six months from now. Can I apply for an FNP START scholarship?

I have submitted my doctoral dissertation and, as a result, have lost the PhD candidate status. I am now awaiting the defence, and once I have defended my dissertation, I intend to apply for a position that will allow me to continue my research. Can I apply for an FNP START scholarship?

Yes. You may take part in the competition provided that the rector/vice-rector considers you to be affiliated with the university and signs your application for an FNP START scholarship. In such a case, the rector/vice-rector may rely on a statement or reference from your PhD supervisor confirming that you are conducting research.

For us, what is important is that the application is signed by the applicant's (institution) authorised representative, i.e. its rector/vice-rector in the case of universities.

5. Does the research plan for the coming year, required as part of the application, refer to the 2026/2027 academic year, the 2027 calendar year, or should it cover the one-year period following the award of the FNP START scholarship?

The research plan should cover the 2027 calendar year. We do not require a detailed work schedule, but rather a general description of your research plans for the near future.

Please do not refer in this section to your own publications, whether single-authored or co-authored, unless they are included in the list of your five most important publications.

Please also ensure that the description complies with the formatting requirements set out in the instructions.

6. Can I include figures or graphs in the description of the research achievement or in my research plan for the coming year?

Yes. Figures and graphs may be included provided that the two-page limit is not exceeded.

Please also ensure that the description complies with the formatting requirements set out in the instructions.

7. In the description of the research achievement, can the reference list be included on a third page, or must it fit within the two-page limit?

The reference list may be included on a third page.

Please do not refer to your own publications, whether single-authored or co-authored, unless they are included in the list of your five most important publications.

Please also ensure that the description complies with the formatting requirements set out in the instructions and that the references are formatted in accordance with APA 7.

8. Can I submit an unpublished manuscript with my application?

Yes, provided that you also submit confirmation that the manuscript has been accepted for publication.

Confirmation of acceptance, either in the form of a statement from the publisher or email correspondence clearly indicating that the manuscript has been accepted and will be published, should be submitted electronically to the online application.

9. Can the list of publications include only granted patents, or can patent applications be also included?

The list of publications may include only granted patents. Information about patent applications may be included in the description of your research achievement.

10. Can a review article (with an Impact Factor) be included in the list of publications, or should the list include original research papers only?

Review articles may also be included if you have no other significant original research articles or if the review article is particularly relevant to your research.

Please do not include information on bibliometric indicators anywhere in the application as these are not taken into account in the expert assessment of your research achievements.

11. I have many publications and would like to include all of them, or at least more than the three required, in my application. How can I do that?

We ask you to choose and submit the **full texts of no more than three of your most important works** (publications, patents, or conference contributions), as well as a **list of no more than five of your most important publications**.

Including a complete list of your publications in any other supporting document is considered a formal error.

Please do not refer to your own publications, whether single-authored or co-authored, in the description of research achievement or in your research plans unless they are included in the list of your five most important publications.

Please do not include a list of publications in your CV or provide information on bibliometric indicators anywhere in the application as these are not taken into account in the expert assessment of your research achievement.

12. I am currently a PhD candidate at a university and also work at an institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS). In this case, which institution should act as the applicant in the competition? Can I declare a dual affiliation in the system? Should I submit opinions from my research supervisors at both institutions?

It is not possible to declare a dual affiliation in the system. If you wish, you can indicate both affiliations in your CV.

In this situation, you may choose which institution will act as the applicant. This may be either the university, in which case the application must be signed by the rector/vice-rector, or the PAS institute, in which case it must be signed by the head of the institute or a person authorised to represent it.

You can submit only one opinion from one of your research supervisors. This person must also sign your list of publications.

13. Can my assistant PhD supervisor act as my research supervisor in the FNP START scholarship?

Yes.

14. I defended my doctoral dissertation last month. Can my PhD supervisor act as my research supervisor in the FNP START scholarship?

Yes.

15. Who should sign my application as my research supervisor if I have already obtained my habilitation (dr hab.)?

In this case, the application should be signed by your immediate superior, i.e. the dean or the head of your institute/department.

17. Can the application be signed by the dean on behalf of the applicant institution, rather than by the rector/vice-rector?

Yes, provided that the rector has duly authorised the dean to act on their behalf. Applications signed by a dean as a representative of the applicant institution will be accepted only in such cases.

A copy of the authorization (power of attorney, *pełnomocnictwo*) should be attached to the application so that the dean's authority to sign it can be verified.

18. In addition to the rector's signature, does the application require the dean's signature or approval?

We do not require such approval. However, before signing an application, the rector may require it to be approved by the dean or the head of an institute at the university.

We see it as a matter of the university's internal rules.

19. Does the application require the approval of the Faculty Council or Research Discipline Council?

No, we do not require such approval.

20. What stamps are required on an application submitted by a university?

If the application is signed by hand, a stamp, bearing the name of the applicant's representative, i.e. the rector/vice-rector, is required.

If the application is signed electronically, no stamps are required.

Handwritten and electronic signatures cannot be combined on the same application form.

21. Which supporting documents (attachments) should be submitted in electronic form and which in hard copy?

All attachments must be submitted in electronic form only.

Only a hand-signed application form must also be sent to the Foundation in hard copy, with all required signatures, stamps, and authorizations (*pełnomocnictwa*), where applicable.

Applications signed electronically do not require stamps or a hard-copy submission.

22. Do I have to send a hard copy of the application if it has been signed electronically?

No.

23. In what language should the application be completed?

The application can be completed in either Polish or English.