

Instructions for

FNP START 2027

scholarship: application and administration

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1. WHO CAN APPLY

STATUS OF CANDIDATES

The FNP START scholarship is open to PhD students affiliated with Polish research institutions and people, including PhD holders, carrying out R&D activities (research and/or development activities) in Polish institutions, e.g., research institutes, companies, or foundations, whose statutory purposes include conducting scientific research and/or development activities.

R&D ACTIVITIES (research and development) are systematic creative activities undertaken to increase the body of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture, and society, as well as to devise new applications of available knowledge.

R&D activities comprise three types:

- Basic research – theoretical and/or experimental work undertaken to acquire new knowledge without any particular application or use in view;
- Applied research – research undertaken to acquire new knowledge directed towards specific practical aim, objective, or application;
- Experimental development – work drawing on existing knowledge to develop new products, services and processes, or to significantly improve existing ones.

NOTE: The Foundation does not require candidates to hold a permanent employment contract. Other forms of employment under which a candidate conducts research are also acceptable. These include a contract for a specific work (*umowa o dzieło*), a contract of mandate (*umowa zlecenia*), participation in a research project, part-time employment, etc. The scholarship is paid on the basis of a trilateral agreement among the Foundation, the scholarship holder, and the Polish research institution or institution where the scholarship holder conducts research or/and development activities.

CANDIDATES' SCIENTIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Only candidates with research accomplishments documented by publications, patents or conference papers are eligible for an FNP START scholarship.

CHANGE IN LOCATION OF RESEARCH OR PHD PROGRAMME DURING THE COURSE OF THE COMPETITION

If, during the competition, a candidate changes the institution where they conduct their research and/or R&D activities or they are awarded a doctoral degree, the scholarship agreement—if the candidate is awarded the scholarship—may be concluded with another Polish research institution where they will continue their research or doctoral programme.

AGE OF CANDIDATES

Candidates' age is determined on the basis of the calendar year. The exact date of birth (day and month) is not taken into account.

The age limit of 30 means that candidates born in 1996 or later are eligible to participate in the competition.

The age limit of 30 may be extended, by a maximum of 2 years, due to breaks in research activity:

- by one year, provided that such breaks lasted for a total of at least 12 months;
- by two years, provided that such breaks lasted for a total of at least 24 months.

An extended age limit of 32 means that candidates born in 1994 or later are eligible for the competition.

NOTE: Documented breaks in research activity include, for example, unpaid leave, if the candidate did not conduct research in that period; leave related to parenting, sick leave, employment in the R&D sector without involvement in research activities, employment in other sectors of the economy, etc.

The age limit of 30 may be extended:

- on account of the birth of a child (for female candidates);
- or the adoption of a child (for all candidates, regardless of gender),

by one year for each child, irrespective of the child's date of birth or adoption.

NOTE: The grounds for extending the age limit set forth above cannot be combined. The age limit can be extended only on one of these grounds: either due to breaks in research activity or due to the birth/adoption of a child.

2. HOW TO APPLY

Applications for an FNP START scholarship must be submitted online through the electronic system (database) made available by the Foundation at <https://wnioski2023.fnp.org.pl/>

NOTE: The candidate's login should include their last name.

An FNP START application consists of an application form and supporting documents called attachments.

Before submitting an application, please read carefully the *Rules for Award of Stipends in the START Programme* and these Instructions.

BEFORE YOU START

Before you begin to complete the online application form, you should:

- **prepare all supporting documents required under the competition rules in an electronic form (pdf).** The files should be named as specified in these Instructions, formatted in accordance with the relevant guidelines, and, where a template is available, prepared using that template.
- **make sure who will act as the applicant's representative.** In the case of a university, it should be the rector or vice-rector; in the case of other institutions, the head of the institution or a person authorised to represent it. The online application must include the

name, position, and academic degree/title of the person acting as the applicant's representative.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Complete the online application form available at <https://wnioski2023.fnp.org.pl/>.
2. Upload to the online application the supporting documents, in an electronic form (.pdf), that are specified in the Rules for Award of Stipends in the START Programme and in these Instructions.
3. Close the completed online application for further editing.
4. Download the application form.
5. Sign the application form and have it signed by the applicant's authorised representative. The application form may be signed by hand, with a qualified electronic signature, or with a trusted signature. If the application form has been signed by hand, it should also bear the relevant stamp. **Different types of signatures (hand and electronic) cannot be combined on the same application form.**
6. Upload the signed application form, either a scan of the hand-signed document or electronically signed document, to the database as a single .pdf file, without any supporting documents. Submit the electronic application by **October 19, 2026**. Submission of the application will be confirmed by e-mail.
7. If the application form has been signed electronically, you do not need to print it and send/deliver a hard copy to the Foundation's office.
8. If the application form has been signed by hand and stamped, send/deliver the hard copy to the Foundation's office at **ul. I. Krasickiego 20/22, 02-611 Warsaw by October 19, 2026**. For applications sent by post, the postmark date will determine whether the deadline has been met.

The application will be considered in the competition only if the properly signed application form has been **submitted** electronically and, in the case of a hand-signed application, **the hard copy has been sent or delivered to the Foundation's office within the deadline**.

NOTE: Do not attach supporting documents to the hard copy of the application sent/delivered to the Foundation's office. These are submitted only electronically.

3. GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING AND SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

LANGUAGE

The application and supporting documents can be either in Polish or in English.

NOTES ON THE APPLICATION

The application form is generated automatically by the <https://wnioski2023.fnp.org.pl/> system after completing all the relevant sections (Candidate, Scientific Achievements and Publications, Age

Limit, Scientific supervisor, Reviewers Group, Attachments and Declarations) and uploading the required supporting documents to the "Attachments and Declarations" section.

The application form (without supporting documents) must be duly signed by the candidate and the applicant's representative. It may be either signed electronically (with a qualified electronic signature or a trusted signature) or printed, duly signed by hand and stamped, and then scanned. Different types of signatures (hand and electronic) cannot be combined on the same application form.

The electronically signed application form or a scan of the hand-signed application form must then be uploaded to the system. In the case of a hand-signed application form, a hard copy must also be sent or delivered to the Foundation's office.

Applications signed electronically (with a qualified electronic signature or a trusted signature) will be considered duly submitted once they have been uploaded to the system and the application has been finalised and submitted in the system. No hard copy is required for electronically signed applications.

More information in the chapter: **Finalising and submitting the application**

EDITING THE APPLICATION ONLINE

The application may be modified or supplemented, including after logging out and back into the system, until the candidate finalises the online application.

3.1. CANDIDATE

Do not use ALL CAPS. Use an initial capital letter for first names, last names and proper nouns. Make sure you do not enter your first name in the surname field. Enter your academic titles and degrees in abbreviated form, such as PhD (Polish examples: *mgr*, *mgr inż.*, *dr*, *dr inż.*, *lek.*, *dr n. med.*, etc).

The form contains two fields for email addresses. We will use the email address provided in the first field to contact you. Providing the second email address is optional.

In the "Affiliation" subsection, please specify the institution where you conduct your research or pursue doctoral studies.

In the "Institution" field, enter the name of the university, institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research institute, research company, or other entity conducting scientific research.

Candidates affiliated with universities should also enter the name of their faculty in the "Unit" field. Please do not provide the addresses of your institution/unit.

3.2. SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

A description of the candidate's research achievement(s) is a mandatory element of the application. The full, two-page version should be uploaded in the "Attachments and Declarations" section (see: **Attachments and declarations (supporting documents)**). A shortened version of this document, no longer than 2,000 characters, should be provided in the "Scientific Achievements and Publications" section.

Starting with the 2026 call, we have introduced a module that allows you to generate a list of publications. This module is available under the "Scientific Achievements and Publications" section. Once the relevant information about publications has been entered into the appropriate fields, you can generate a standard PDF containing the required information. This document should be submitted to your research supervisor for signature, and the signed document must be then uploaded under "Attachments and Declarations".

The list should include no more than five original publications with international or national reach that the candidate considers the most important in their research track record. The full or partial texts (depending on their length) of up to three of these publications, patents or conference papers must be enclosed with the electronic version of the application (see: [Attachments and declarations \(supporting documents\)](#)).

If any of the most important candidate's original publications are co-authored, the candidate's contribution must be explained in one or two sentences in each case. The list must also indicate whether the candidate is the corresponding author. The candidate's contribution must not be expressed as percentage.

NOTE 1: Patent applications **MUST NOT** be included in the list, only granted patents may be included as research output. Patent applications may be mentioned in the description of research achievement(s).

NOTE 2: The list of publications must be signed by the candidate's research supervisor.

NOTE 3: Candidates' research output is assessed on quality rather than quantity. Candidates should therefore include no more than their five most important publications and must not provide a complete list of their publications in any other supporting document. The lists of the FNP START scholarship recipients published on the Foundation's website include information about their publications and can help candidates assess their own research track record. The Foundation recommends that candidates review the lists of publications of previous FNP START scholarship recipients in their field to compare their own research track record with that of previous recipients and assess their chances of success in the competition.

Works accepted for publication may be included in the list of research output only if accompanied by the publisher's confirmation that the work has been accepted for publication.

There is no defined form of/template for such confirmation, but it must clearly state that the work has been accepted and will be published. Both documents signed by the publisher and email confirmations are treated as confirmation of acceptance.

If a publication is already available electronically and has a DOI, it is considered published.

All confirmations of acceptance for publication should be uploaded as a single .pdf file and uploaded under "Attachments and Declarations".

Candidates are advised against providing journal Impact Factors, ministerial points or any other metrics as these are not criteria used to assess the candidates' research achievements.

APA 7th is the preferred citation style. Examples are provided below:

Journal article:

Surname, X., Surname, X. Y., Surname3, Z. (year). Title of the article. Journal, volume(issue), first page – last page.

Kowalski, M., Nowak, P. (2009). Narzędzia komunikacji w XXI wieku. Studia socjologiczne 1(3), s. 19-43.

Book:

Surname, X., Surname, X. Y. (year). Title of the book. Place of Publishing: Publishing house.

Kowalski, M., Nowak, P. (2009) Narzędzia komunikacji w XXI wieku. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Book chapter:

Surname, X. (year). Title of the chapter. In: Y. Surname, B. Surname (ed.), Title of the book (p. first page–last page). Place of publishing: Publishing house.

Kowal, M., Walczak, P. (2009) Narzędzia komunikacji w XXI wieku. In: A. Kowalski, (ed.), ABC komunikacji (p. 120-156). Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

3.3. AGE LIMIT

Information on the age criterion and the grounds for extending the age limit is provided in Chapter 1 of these Instructions, in the subsection **Age of candidates**.

3.4. APPLICANT

In the FNP START competition, the Applicant is the institution with which the candidate is affiliated. It may be a university, an institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a research institute, a research company, or a foundation whose statutory purposes include scientific research.

In the "Institution Authorities" subsection, enter the details of the person who will sign the application. In the case of a university, it should be the Rector or Vice-Rector, or, in exceptional cases, it may be a person duly authorised (by power of attorney) by the Rector.

To determine who should sign the application, please contact the university administration. For other institutions, the application should be signed by the head of the institution or by their duly authorised deputy (by power of attorney).

Any application where the person authorised to represent the institution is identified incorrectly will be disqualified. If in doubt, please consult the programme coordinator.

3.5. SCIENTIFIC SUPERVISOR

Doctoral candidates should indicate either their PhD supervisor or their assistant supervisor (only one of them) as their research supervisor for the purposes of the FNP START competition. In all other cases, the research supervisor should be the head of the candidate's research unit or their immediate supervisor.

In exceptional cases, if the candidate has recently changed their place of employment (within the last few months), the opinion of their previous supervisor may be submitted if the candidate's new supervisor is not yet sufficiently familiar with their research work.

The research supervisor must prepare an opinion about the candidate and sign the list of the candidate's five most important publications, thus confirming that it has been prepared correctly.

The third document to be signed by the supervisor is the "Statement of the Academic Supervisor". A template for this declaration is available in the "Scientific Supervisor" section.

3.6. REVIEWERS GROUP

Applications in the FNP START competition are evaluated within reviewers groups.

They receive a set of applications in related fields (i.e. assigned to the same reviewers group), evaluate each application, and then compare them with one another.

Candidates select the reviewers group themselves so that their application can be assigned to the group best suited for their research.

Some fields are assigned to more than one group. In such cases, the candidate should select the group that, in their view, best matches the nature of their research. When making this decision, candidates should consider the other fields in the same group.

At the request of the expert panel, the Foundation may reassign an application to a different reviewers group if it determines that another group would be more appropriate for the application.

Interdisciplinary research that does not fall clearly within a single reviewer group may be assessed by two groups. The interdisciplinary nature of the application should be explained in the description of the research achievement(s), and the candidate should email the programme officer to request evaluation by two groups.

The list of reviewers groups and respective fields is available on the Foundation's website.

3.7 ATTACHMENTS AND DECLARATIONS (SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS)

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

All supporting documents (attachments and declarations) must be prepared in PDF format and submitted with the application in electronic form only.

Do not use diacritics in attachment file names.

Supporting documents must be uploaded to the <https://wnioski2023.fnp.org.pl/> system in the "Attachments and Declarations" section.

Documents requiring a signature may be either signed by hand and scanned or signed with an electronic signature (qualified electronic signature or trusted signature). **Do not insert images of handwritten signatures into electronic documents.**

The following supporting documents must be submitted with the online application (in electronic version only):

1. Candidate's CV

File name format: **Surname.CV (do not use any diacritics in the surname)**

The CV must not exceed 3 pages.

It must be prepared using the template provided in the system.

Please follow the structure of the template. Sections that are not applicable to you should be deleted, and the information provided within individual sections may be adapted where indicated to best reflect your experience. All text in square brackets contains instructions for completing the CV and must be removed from the final version.

Do not add any new sections or photographs.

- **Name and surname; institutional affiliation**
- **Education**
- **Grants and research funding:** if you have never served as a PI, delete this section from your CV.
- **Research experience:** include relevant research experience, for example, as a doctoral candidate, a research/academic staff member, a team member in a research project, or a fellowship holder during your stay abroad. Adapt the information provided for each entry to best reflect the nature of your research experience.
- **Awards and scholarships:** if you have never received any scholarship/award, delete this section from your CV.
- **Skills & courses:** include the skills and courses are most relevant to your academic and research development.
- **Professional societies:** if you are not a member of any professional society, delete this section from your CV.
- **Conference papers**
- **Additional relevant experience**

Candidate's publications must not be included in the CV.

Failure to comply with these requirements, including the formatting requirements, as set out in the CV template, will be treated as a formal error that may be corrected within seven days of receiving notification from the programme coordinator.

2. List of max. 5 Publications

File name format: [Surname.list](#)

Starting with the 2026 competition, a list of no more than five publications must be generated in the "Scientific Achievements and Publications" section. The file must be signed by the research supervisor and uploaded to the system. For more information on how to prepare the list, see: [Scientific achievements and publications](#).

3. Confirmation of acceptance for publication

File name format: [Surname.confirmation](#)

Papers accepted for publication may be included on the list of research achievements only if accompanied by a document from the publisher confirming their acceptance for publication. The confirmation may be provided in any format, but it must clearly state that the publication has been accepted and will be published.

If the publication is already available in electronic form and has a DOI, it may be considered published.

4. Description of the originality of the research achievement(s)

File name format: **Surname.achievement**

The description of the originality of the research achievement(s) should be prepared with reference to the candidate's list of most important publications. The description must not exceed 2 pages. A reference list (APA 7th) may be included on a third page.

Candidates are encouraged to refer directly to their specific publications in the description. However, **they must not refer to their own work that is not included in the list of the five most important publications/conference papers [presentations/posters] listed in the CV.**

Including such information in the description will be treated as a formal error that may be corrected within seven days of receiving notification from the programme coordinator.

When describing the research achievement, candidates may find it helpful to consider the following questions: What have I researched or discovered? Why is my discovery important? What is innovative about it in the context of international research? What significance might it have for my field of research? Could the discovery have applications beyond academia?

This description is of key importance in the evaluation of the application as reviewers pay particular attention to the subject-matter significance of the candidate's research achievement(s).

Candidates should therefore take particular care to provide a precise description that clearly conveys their substantive contribution.

What does not constitute a research achievement:

- receiving a grant, award or scholarship;
- being invited to and giving a presentation at a major conference;
- earning an academic degree/title;
- establishing an important research collaboration;
- undertaking a research stay abroad;
- publishing an important book or a paper in a prestigious international journal;
- exhibiting work abroad, in the case of artistic disciplines;
- obtaining a patent;
- commercialising a discovery.

What constitutes a research achievement:

- the results of the candidate's own research, which may, for example, have been published in a prestigious journal, presented at a conference, or may have resulted from research conducted as part of a significant research collaboration, during a research stay abroad, or

with grant funding, or may have formed the basis for the award of an academic degree/title, prize or scholarship;

- the scholarly value and originality of an important book;
- creative work that may have been presented at a major exhibition in Poland or abroad;
- a discovery or invention for which the candidate has obtained a patent, or which has led to business collaboration (commercialisation).

Please describe your research achievement **in the first person**, that is, as you would describe YOUR OWN research rather than research of another person.

Candidates who believe that their research stands out **for boldly crossing disciplinary boundaries research, opening new research perspectives, and making novel contributions to research** may address this in the description of their most important research achievement(s). They should also indicate which of the publications presented in the application or which parts of those publications relate to research of this kind.

In such cases, candidates should also:

- clearly explain what makes their research interdisciplinary in this sense, what this interdisciplinarity stems from, and what added value this approach brings to their R&D activities;
- indicate the additional reviewers group(s) in which, in their opinion, the application should be reviewed and email the programme officer to request evaluation by two groups (see [Reviewer group](#)).

The expert panel will determine whether an application should be considered as crossing disciplinary boundaries, opening new research perspectives, and making novel contributions to research.

The Foundation will make every effort to make sure that applications deemed interdisciplinary in this sense by the expert panel and selected for subsequent stages of the competition are evaluated by an appropriately selected group of reviewers, representing different research areas and fields relevant to the application, including those indicated by the candidate.

Applications deemed interdisciplinary may be considered for the **Professor Barbara Skarga Scholarship**, which may be awarded once a year to one of the FNP START scholarship recipients.

The description of the research achievement must be formatted in Aptos or Times New Roman, 12 pt, with 1.15-line spacing, justified text, a 1.25 cm first-line indent, and 2.5 cm margins.

5. Description of the research plans for the next year – 2027

File name format: [Surname.plans](#)

The description of research plans for the 2027 calendar year may include information on plans arising from a research grant awarded by a research funding institution other than the Foundation, such as the National Science Centre (NCN).

The description of research plans must be formatted in Aptos or Times New Roman, 12 pt with 1.15-line spacing, justified text and a 1.25 cm first-line indent, and 2.5 cm margins. The description must not exceed two pages. A reference list (APA 7th) may be included on a third page.

Candidates are encouraged to refer directly to their specific publications in the description. However, they must not refer to their own work that is not included in the list of the five most important publications/conference papers listed in the CV.

6. Opinion of the scientific supervisor

File name format: Surname.opinion

An opinion by the candidate's research supervisor or the head of the research team in which the candidate conducts their research.

The electronic version must bear the supervisor's signature.

For PhD holders, the research supervisor must be the candidate's immediate supervisor or the head of the research team in which the candidate conducts their research. For doctoral candidates, the research supervisor must be their doctoral supervisor (*promotor*) or assistant supervisor (*promotor pomocniczy*).

7. Declaration of the scientific supervisor

File name format: Surname.supervisorsdeclaration

The declaration template is available in the downloadable documents and under the "Scientific Supervisor" and "Attachments and Declarations" sections. Please attach a file signed with a digital signature (qualified or trusted electronic signature) or signed by hand and scanned.

8. Texts of the 3 most important publications of the candidate

File name format: Surname.fulltext1, Surname.fulltext2, etc.

The electronic application must include the full texts of up to three publications selected by the candidate as the most important in their research track record.

These may include papers accepted for publication provided that confirmation of acceptance for publication is also attached in the relevant section. The maximum file size is 20 MB.

For lengthy publications, including books, please submit only the table of contents, introduction and conclusions, or those sections that will enable reviewers to assess the significance of the publication.

After uploading the supporting documents to the application form, please make sure that the files open correctly and are not encrypted or corrupted.

Publications submitted with the application must be included in the List of Publications.

9. Declaration of change of surname

File name format: Surname.change

The declaration template is available in the downloadable files. This applies only to candidates who have changed their surname and have a research track record under their previous surname. Please attach a file signed with a digital signature (qualified or trusted electronic signature) or signed by hand and scanned.

OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Do not submit any supporting documents other than those listed above, such as additional references, letters of recommendations, testimonials, a list of all publications, etc.

Submitting any other materials will be treated as a formal error that may be corrected within seven days of receiving notification from the programme coordinator.

3.8. DECLARATIONS INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION FORM

The FNP START application form includes declarations to be made by the Candidate and the Applicant. These declarations are automatically printed together with the application.

The full text of each declaration is available in the downloadable documents in the system so that candidates and applicants can review them in advance.

In the case of the **Candidate**, the declarations concern, among other things:

- confirmation that the Candidate meets the formal eligibility requirements of the competition;
- confirmation that the Candidate has read and agrees to comply with the competition regulations;
- consent to the processing of personal data by the Foundation for Polish Science;
- consent to the application being made available to experts and reviewers involved in its evaluation in the competition;
- consent to providing information for the purposes of evaluations conducted by the Foundation for Polish Science or other authorised entities, regardless of the outcome of the competition;
- in the case of Candidates over the age of 30 in the year in which the application is submitted, confirmation of breaks in research activity or a declaration concerning the birth or adoption of a child;
- the consequences of providing false information or making false declarations.

In the case of the **Applicant**, the declarations concern, among other things:

- confirmation that the Applicant has read and agrees to comply with the competition regulations;
- consent to the processing of personal data by the Foundation for Polish Science;

- consent to the application being made available to experts and reviewers involved in its evaluations in the competition;
- consent to providing information for the purposes of evaluations conducted by the Foundation for Polish Science or other authorised entities, regardless of the outcome of the competition;
- the Applicant's declaration that, if a START scholarship is awarded, the Applicant will obtain all approvals from ethics committees and any other permits required by law for the research in question and will commence such research only after the relevant approvals and permits have been obtained.

4. FINALISING AND SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

Under the "Application Verification and Submission" section, you can check whether all required forms have been completed and whether all required supporting documents have been attached.

If anything is missing or incorrect, a report will be displayed to help you quickly identify the issue. If all required elements have been correctly entered and uploaded, you can proceed to finalising and submitting the application.

Before finalising the application, we recommend clicking the "Generate the Application" button to create a draft version and check that all the information provided is correct. If everything is correct, click "Finish Editing Data" and then generate the final version of the application by clicking "Generate the Application" again.

Please note that once the candidate has finalised the application, its content will become read-only and no further changes can be made.

The application may be reopened for editing at the candidate's written request provided that the request is sent to the programme coordinator before the application deadline.

WHO SIGNS AND STAMPS THE APPLICATION FORM

The final version of the scholarship application must be signed by:

1. the candidate
2. the applicant's representative (i.e. the Rector or Vice-Rector of a university, or in the case of another entity, the head of that entity or a person authorized to represent it).

If the application is signed by hand, it must bear a stamp bearing the name of the applicant's representative: the Rector or Vice-Rector in the case of a university, or the head of the institution or a person authorised to represent it in the case of another type of research institution.

3. Applications signed electronically (qualified electronic signature or trusted signature) do not require stamps.

4. Digital and handwritten signatures must not be combined on the same application form. Different types of signatures, however, may be used for supporting documents.

NOTE: Applications that do not bear the signatures or stamps specified above will not be accepted. The application does not to be initialled on every page.

USE OF QUALIFIED ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

Qualified electronic signatures are accepted as equivalent to handwritten signatures and do not require a stamp. Starting with the 2026 competition, we also accept trusted signature, i.e. "Podpis zaufany", on applications.

We recommend verifying the validity of digital signatures on the relevant government website before uploading the signed documents to the system. We also recommend keeping the original file and the signature validation report on your device.

Applications signed electronically are submitted only in digital form.

Digital and handwritten signatures must not be combined on the same application form. Different types of signatures, however, may be used for supporting documents.

SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION AND DEADLINE

For applications signed with a qualified electronic signature or a trusted signature, no hard copy is required. The application must be submitted by uploading it to **wnioski2023.fnp.org.pl** under the "Application Verification and Submission" section by **October 19, 2026**.

For applications signed by hand, the signed and stamped application must be scanned and uploaded to the system under the "Application Verification and Submission" section. The original hard copy must also be sent by post or delivered to the Foundation's office by **October 19, 2026**.

For hard copies, the postmark date will determine whether the deadline has been met.

We recommend keeping proof of postage in case your package is lost.

Fundacja na rzecz Nauki Polskiej
ul. I. Krasickiego 20/22,
02-611 Warszawa

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION BY FNP

Due to the large number of applications, the Foundation does not send confirmation of receipt of the paper version of the application.

Candidates who require confirmation of delivery should send their application by a postal service that provides such a proof.

5. STAGES AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

5.1. STAGES OF APPLICATION EVALUATION

1. Stage I: formal evaluation

The formal evaluation is carried out by the Foundation staff. Applications that do not meet the formal requirements—because they have not been signed by the applicants and/or the candidate or because they have been submitted electronically or sent by post/delivered to the Foundation's office after the deadline—will not be considered. **These formal errors cannot be remedied.**

Candidates whose applications require additional information or supporting documents will be notified accordingly by the programme coordinator. Such formal errors may be remedied within seven calendar days from the date on which the notification is sent.

If an electronic file submitted as an attachment to the online application form is found to be corrupted, or if spelling errors are identified, the programme coordinator may request that they be corrected at any stage of the competition.

2. Stage II: Expert evaluation

Each application is evaluated by at least two experts. They receive applications assigned to specific reviewers groups (see also: **Reviewers group**) within the same broad area of research. Each application is assigned to one of the three categories below, based on the quality and originality of the candidate's research track record and the significance of their research achievements:

Group A – highest recommendation for the next stage of evaluation: the strongest applications, submitted by outstanding candidates with an original and innovative research track record and greatest significance of their research achievement(s).

Group B – conditional recommendation for the next stage of evaluation: applications from candidates with a strong research track record and research achievements that are, however, less significant than those presented in the strongest applications.

Group C – no recommendation for the next stage of evaluation: applications from candidates whose research is still at an early stage. These candidates cannot yet demonstrate a substantial research track record; their results have primarily local significance, and their publications consist predominantly of brief conference reports or popular science publications.

The experts' evaluations are discussed and reviewed at experts panel meetings held within the respective broad areas of research. Panel members are thus able to compare the overall quality of the applications under review. Applications considered by the panel to be the strongest are selected for the third stage of the competition. The remaining applications do not proceed to the subsequent stages of the competition.

3. Stage III: reviewers evaluation

Applications selected for the third stage of the competition are evaluated within their respective reviewers groups. Applications in each reviewers group are evaluated by at least three reviewers.

The reviewers' task is to rank the applications from strongest to weakest and to justify their assessment, addressing the originality of the candidate's research track record and achievement(s), as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the application. The reviewers' assessments include:

- A. a score on a scale of 1 to 7 (the strongest applications receive 7 points; those rated lowest receive 1 point)
- B. a rank resulting from the ordering of the applications from strongest to weakest.

4. Stage IV: selection of FNP START scholarship recipients

The final selection of the scholarship recipients is made by the Foundation's Management Board on the basis of a detailed analysis of all evaluations of the candidates' and their applications.

The Board's decision is subject to approval by the FNP Council.

5.2. CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

FNP START scholarships are awarded in recognition of the research achievements of young researchers to date. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage the most outstanding early-career researchers to pursue further growth in research.

QUALITY AND ORIGINALITY OF THE RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT(S)

Under the FNP START programme rules, the primary criterion for the evaluation of applications is the scientific/scholarly quality and originality of the candidates' research track record and achievement(s). It is assessed, in particular, on the basis of:

- the list of up to five publications, patents or conference papers submitted with the online application;
- full texts of up to three of the above-mentioned publications, patents or conference papers, submitted with the online application, that the candidate considers as their most important research output to date;
- the description of the originality of the candidate's most important research achievement(s), submitted with the online application.

Reviewers consider substantive merit only, that is, the originality and innovativeness of the candidate's research track record and achievement(s).

Even a single work that makes a significant contribution to the candidate's field of study may be sufficient for a scholarship to be awarded.

When evaluating the candidate's research track record and achievement(s), reviewers therefore pay particular attention to whether the works presented are original and whether they introduce new ideas, methods or other novel contributions to the candidate's field of research.

In the case of conference-related work, reviewers assess whether they are innovative works prepared at the invitation of the conference organisers or merely brief communications such as conference reports or summaries.

When evaluating co-authored publications, reviewers consider the candidate's individual contribution to the publication, based on the information provided by the candidate.

It is the quality of the publications, rather than their number or bibliometric indicators, that is assessed.

Candidates should therefore present no more than their five best publications in the relevant supporting document and **must not include their other published work in other sections of the application**.

Candidates should also refrain from providing bibliometric indicators, including citation counts.

MOST IMPORTANT RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT

When submitting an application to the competition, candidates present their most important research achievement(s), arising directly from their research track record.

This description is of key importance in the evaluation of the application, as reviewers pay particular attention to the substantive significance of the research achievement(s) presented. Candidates should therefore take particular care to provide a precise description that clearly reflects the substantive contribution of their research.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

The evaluation also takes into account the research plans for the coming calendar year presented in the application.

However, unlike in research grant competitions, these plans are not the primary focus of the assessment. The FNP START scholarship is awarded in recognition of what the candidate has already achieved.

FEEDBACK

After the competition results have been announced, candidates may contact the programme coordinator (Anna Jamka for humanities and social sciences; Aleksandra Czerniawska for all other applications) to request access to brief expert comments/reviews. Scores and rankings are not disclosed.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT OF COMPETITION RESULTS AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

A list of the FNP START scholarship recipients is published on the Foundation's website. Information about the results is also sent to all candidates: first to the scholarship recipients, and then, to the remaining candidates.

If you have any questions that are not answered in these Instructions or in the programme regulations, please contact the coordinators:

Dr Aleksandra Czerniawska, phone: +48 607 451 804. email: czerniawska@fnp.org.pl;

Dr Anna Jamka email: jamka@fnp.org.pl

We wish you every success in the competition!