



# REGULATIONS

## ON THE STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITY OF THE SCIENCE FUND

*Adopted by resolution of the Academic Council of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna on 29 March 2017 (Minutes No. 20 of 29.03.2017), supplemented by the Academic Council on 18.12.2017 (Minutes No. 30 of 18.12.2017), amended on 16.07.2018 (Minutes No. 37 of 16.07.2018 of the AC), amended on 15.09.2020 (Minutes No. 8 of 15.09.2020 of the AC)*

### CHAPTER 1

## GOALS AND PRIORITIES

**Art. 1. The goals** of the Science Fund are:

1. To encourage the development of research at the Medical University - Varna (MU-Varna).
2. To support the career growth of the academic staff with a focus on PhD students, postdoctoral students and young scientists.
3. To form strong multidisciplinary research teams.
4. To provide competitive funding for research projects and developments with scientific value, relevance and practical application.

**Art. 2. Core activities** related to the functioning of the Science Fund:

1. Defining the rules and requirements for funding of research projects.
2. Organizing the competitions for the selection of research projects.

3. Coordination of the process for evaluation of the project proposals received.
4. Ranking of research projects.
5. Monitoring and control of the implementation of the awarded projects, according to the regulations in force, The Ordinance and the internal rules.

**Art. 3. The Priorities** of the Fund in respect of the projects are:

1. SCIENTIFIC and/or PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION - the project implementation should lead to an increase in knowledge in the relevant scientific field or to the improvement of the conditions for conducting any research activities.
2. RELEVANCE of the formulated problem from the point of view of modern science.
3. ORIGINALITY of the proposed research.
4. INNOVATION of research.
5. COMPLIANCE with the scientific priorities of MU-Varna.
6. PUBLICITY - the project should include appropriate forms to ensure the promotion of results.
7. EXPERIENCE of the leader and the team in previous research projects.
8. PUBLICATIONS of the leader and the team in the respective scientific field.
9. PARTICIPANTS - the research team should include PhD students, postdoctoral students, young scientists or students.
10. FINANCING - provided co-financing of the project from other sources.
11. SUSTAINABILITY - there is a long-term improvement of the scientific infrastructure and/or self-financing after the completion of the project activities.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Art. 4.** The Science Fund is governed by the Academic Council (AC) with the help of an Expert Commission (EC).

Art. 5. (1) (Amended on 16.07.2018) The EC shall be appointed by the Rector based on the proposals of the councils of the main units (faculty, college, institute, department), which are submitted to the Science and Research Vice-Rector for each competition session.

(2) In order to exclude any conflicts of interest, the EC members may not apply individually or in a project team in the relevant competition session.

**Art. 6.** The EC shall consist of at least 5 members working under an employment contract with MU-Varna, including a Chairperson. The Commission shall be assisted by a Secretary from the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department.

**Art. 7.** The EC shall:

1. Organize, conduct and report on the competitions, incl. on the final project ranking.
2. The EC shall evaluate the eligibility of the costs incurred for the project implementation based on the submitted final reports and reviews, subject to the restrictions specified in Art. 19 (4) of the Ordinance.
3. The EC shall ensure full and equal access of the members of the academic staff to the materials related to its work.

**Art. 8.** (1) The meetings of the EC shall be held in the presence of a quorum of at least half of its members.

(2) The decisions shall be taken by an open vote and an ordinary majority.

(3) Minutes of each meeting shall be taken and signed by the EC members present and by the Secretary.

**Art. 9.** (1) The Academic Council of MU-Varna shall control the activities of the EC.

(2) (Amended on 16.07.2018) The AC shall accept the results of the competition for the respective year based on a report by the Science and Research Vice-Rector.

(3) The AC shall specify the guidelines for application and the criteria for project evaluation and ranking, and in case of any change these shall enter into force not later than the opening date of the respective competition session.

(4) (Amended on 16.07.2018) The AC shall set the amount of the subsidy to be spent on scientific activities and on publication of textbooks and scientific papers.

(5) The AC shall set the amount of the reviewers' fee, based on a proposal of the EC.

**Art. 10.** The administrative services to the activities under the Science Fund shall be carried out by the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONDUCTING A COMPETITION SESSION

**Art. 11.** (1) The competition for selection of research projects to be financed out of the Science Fund shall be opened pursuant to an order of the Rector.

(2) The opening of the annual competition procedure shall take place no earlier than six months after the one of the previous year.

(3) The competition shall be announced on the website of MU-Varna and with notification to the heads of the main units and branches electronically.

**Art. 12.** Projects that comply with the scientific priorities of the Medical University - Varna shall be funded under the Science Fund.

**Art. 13.** The projects that can be funded by the Fund should be in the areas of: Medicine; Dental Medicine; Pharmacy; Public Health; Health Care; Biotechnology and others in which training of students and PhD students is provided. Funding is also allowed for:

1. Projects for participation in international research programs;
2. (Amended on 16.07.2018) Current research projects (up to 10% of the research grant);
3. Projects for co-financing scientific forums and cultural events;
4. Infrastructure projects for conducting quality and competitive research at MU-Varna.
5. Demonstration projects;
6. Specialized publications in refereed and impact factor printed media;
7. Publication of scientific papers.

**Art. 14.** **The duration** of the projects can be from 1 to 3 years.

**Art. 15.** Individual lecturers working under a basic employment contract or under an employment contract for additional work at the higher school under Art. 111 of the Labor Code, PhD students, students and teams from MU-Varna may participate in the competitions for financing projects from the Science Fund.

**Art. 16.** (1) **Head** of the research team or the creative team shall be a lecturer from the state higher school who shall hold a Doctor's degree and shall have proven scientific competence and experience relevant to the objectives of the project.

(2) A person with a Doctor's degree shall be entitled to participate as a manager of both large and small-scale projects within one competition session.

**Art. 17.** (1) (Amended on 16.07.2018) **The project team** must include: a Manager and an Administrative and Financial Manager.

(2) The project team can include PhD students, postdoctoral students, young scientists and students, and their participation shall give them an advantage in the project evaluation/approval.

(3) Lecturers, researchers and PhD students from other scientific organizations and universities may be attracted to the research team under para. 1.

**Art. 18.** (1) (Amended and supplemented on 15.09.2020) **The application documents** and the manner to file them are set out in the Guidelines for Applicants in the specific competition session.

(2) (Amended on 15.09.2020) The complete set of application documents shall be filed on paper and/or online.

(3) The deadline for submission of documents shall be no later than 1 month prior to the date of announcement of the competition.

(4) (Repealed on 15.09.2020)

**Art. 19.** The following conditions must be considered when planning the project budget:

1. The project budget is presented in Bulgarian BGN.
2. The prices shall be indicated inclusive of VAT.
3. Where remuneration is provided, the amount should also include the funds for social security to be paid by the employer.

4. The remunerations may not exceed:

▫ **35% of the project budget with the participation of PhD students and/or young scientists.**

▫ **10% of the project budget in case of non-participation of PhD students and/or young scientists.**

5. In allocating the remunerations, at least 30% of them shall be intended for PhD students and/or young scientists, if involved in the project team.

6. The unit prices indicated in the financial plan should be in accordance with the attached updated proposal.

7. Expenses for activities not related to the project are ineligible:

- purchase of furniture, household appliances, telephones and the like;
- purchase of work clothes and shoes;
- for subscription to newspapers and non-specialized magazines;
- for payment of fees for participation in courses for qualification, computer literacy, language training, etc.;
- for additional payment for telephones and repair of premises (except for infrastructure projects);
- contributions to the state higher school for overhead costs amounting to more than 10% of the total project value.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PROJECT EVALUATION AND RANKING**

**Art. 20.** (1) (Amended on 16.07.2018) The procedure for evaluation of the project proposals received shall begin with a review for administrative compliance by a technical commission appointed by an order of the Rector based on a proposal of the Science and Research Vice-Rector. The Commission shall evaluate on the following criteria:

1. Availability of an administrative and scientific description of the project proposal.
2. Availability of all appendices as specified in the Guidelines for Applicants.
3. Compliance of the project proposal with the requirements set out in the Guidelines for Applicants.

(2) The Technical Commission under para. 1 shall prepare a report of its findings, which shall be submitted to the EC.

**Art. 21.** Within two weeks after the deadline for submission of documents, the first meeting of the EC shall be held to:

1. Appoint a rapporteur for each project.
2. (Amended on 16.07.2018) Take decisions on the eligibility of applicants in the specific competition session. The EC shall not allow for review any applicants found to have committed any violations in the implementation of any previous and/or current projects funded by the Science Fund over last three years.
3. Get acquainted with the findings of the Technical Commission and to make further decisions.

**Art. 22.** (1) The rapporteur should get acquainted with the project proposal and select two reviewers, subject to their consent.

(2) At least one of the reviewers must not work under a contract with MU-Varna.

(3) No members of the EC as well as related persons who are administratively subordinate or related to members of the project team can be elected as reviewers.

**Art. 23.** (Amended on 16.07.2018) Within two weeks after the first meeting of the EC, the next meeting shall be held, at which the proposed reviewers shall be presented and approved. The EC members are not allowed to disclose the names of reviewers.

**Art. 24.** Within one week, the rapporteur should provide contact details of each of the approved reviewers (full name, institution, position, mobile or business phone and email) to the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department.

**Art. 25.** The Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department shall send/provide to each reviewer the materials to be reviewed, which shall include: the project proposal, the appendices thereto and the review card as well as all documents required for payment of a fee for the prepared review, in accordance with the regulation of MU-Varna.

**Art. 26.** (1) The original documents, filled in and signed, shall be sent by courier/lodged to the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department no later than 10 days after receipt of the materials to be reviewed.

(2) (Repealed on 15.09.2020)

(3) In case of incorrect and incomplete content of the submitted documents, the reviewer's fee may be paid after the deadline stipulated in the contract.

**Art. 27.** (1) The Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department shall provide the reviews received to the relevant rapporteur in an electronic form.

(2) The rapporteur shall prepare an opinion containing a summary of the assessments made by the reviewers and rapporteur's own comments which is to be expressed within one week of receiving the review cards.

(3) The comments shall be sent online to the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department.

**Art. 28.** (1) The collected reports shall be discussed at a meeting of the EC and, if necessary, arbitrators shall be appointed in case of a difference of more than 30 % between the two project evaluations or where the project is discarded by one reviewer.

(2) In case of a difference of more than 50% in the evaluations of the two reviewers, the Expert Commission shall decide on a further procedure with respect to the ranking.

(3) At final ranking, it is within the powers of the EC to index the project evaluations by up to 5%, subject to compliance with the MU-Varna strategy and priorities.

(4) (Amended on 15.09.2020) The ranking shall be done based on the evaluations given for each project proposal.

(5) (Amended on 16.07.2018) The decisions of the EC shall be final and subject to reporting to the Academic Council by the Science and Research Vice-Rector.

(6) (Amended on 16.07.2018) Within one week following the announcement of the competition results, the project managers shall have the right to access the reviews in the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department while maintaining the reviewers' anonymity.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

**Art. 29.** The contracts with the winning project managers shall be entered into within 10 days after the EC decision on the final ranking. Their content shall comply with the regulatory requirements as set out in the Ordinance.

**Art. 30.** (1) (Suppl. on 18.12.2017) For contracts with a period of implementation of over one year, with a positive opinion of the council of the main unit, an **additional agreement** shall be signed for the next year, including an updated cost estimate for the allocation of the funds.



The extension period may not exceed the three-year period provided for in the Ordinance from the date of entering into the contract for the project activity, except in the cases when the procedures for purchase and delivery of equipment, consumables and reagents delay the implementation of the project algorithm.

(2) (Amended 16.07.2018) Apart from the cases under the previous paragraph, provided that that the main goal of the project is not affected, a change in the budget shall be allowed, expressed in the transfer of funds within one budget section or a change in the agreed amount of the budget sections (in case of transfer of funds between them), which change will not prevent the achievement of the planned results. In order to apply the amendment, the project manager shall promptly notify in writing the Science and Research Vice-Rector.

**Art. 31.** (1) The implementation of the projects shall begin with a report by the project manager with attached Financial Plan, Technical Specifications and Commitment Application (in compliance with the ex ante control rules) to the MU Assistant Rector within two weeks of entering into the contract or the supplementary agreement.

(2) The purchase of the equipment, consumables, materials, external services, etc. provided for in the projects shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Public Procurement Act. In some cases, this may require adjustments to the technical specifications.

(3) (Amended 16.07.2018) In case of exceeding the funds set in the Financial Plan, due to reasons directly dependent on the current Public Procurement Act, the project manager shall notify in writing the Science and Research Vice-Rector before entering into the public procurement contract between MU-Varna and the company selected as the contractor. The Science and Research Vice-Rector shall convene the EC to take a subsequent decision, which is subject to approval by the Academic Council. Where a decision for additional funding is adopted, an additional agreement shall be entered into with the project manager.

**Art. 32.** (1) The reporting of the activity and the expenses incurred under the project shall be done according to the System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting of Results as approved by the Rector of MU-Varna through Interim and Final Reports which shall be submitted to the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department.

(2) The interim reports shall be as follows:

1. Six-monthly reports - they must be prepared for the first half of the year not later than 7 July of the current calendar year.

2. Annual reports - not later than 10 December of the current calendar year - for projects with an implementation period of more than one year.

(3) A final report must be prepared by the project manager within 30 days after its completion.

**Art. 33.** (1) A final reviewer shall be appointed after the completion of each project and the submission of a final report.

(2) The final reviewer shall be a habilitated person other than a member of the unit proposed by the EC.

(3) The review shall be paid within the funds provided for the contract performance.

**Art. 34.** The reviewer shall submit their final review to the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department within 30 days from the date of entering into their reviewing contract.

**Art. 35.** The current and final reports shall comply with the System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting of Results as approved by the Rector of MU-Varna.

**Art. 36.** (1) The final reports and reviews shall be examined by the EC members and an assessment of the compliance of the activities with the preset goals and objectives and the eligibility of the costs incurred for the project implementation shall be made at a meeting thereafter.

(2) The remunerations of the members of the project team as provided in the Financial Plan shall be paid within 3 months after the acceptance of the final report by the EC.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DUTIES OF THE PROJECT MANAGER**

**Art. 37.** (1) The project manager shall organize and direct the activities for the contract performance, according to its clauses, the requirements of the Ordinance and these Regulations.

(2) A decision to suspend the project implementation period, if there are any objective reasons, shall be taken at a meeting of the Academic Council based on a proposal by the EC. In case that the contract is terminated due to Contractor's fault, the Contractor shall have to pay the Contracting Authority a penalty in accordance with the contract provisions.

(3) The Academic Council of MU-Varna shall redistribute the funds in case of non-fulfillment of the commitments under the contracts among the other research teams that fulfill their obligations under the contracts.

(4) After entering into the contract, the project manager shall be required to submit an application to the Commission for Research Ethics (where people are involved in the research) or respectively to the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency at the Ministry of Agriculture (where animals are involved in the research). In the absence of any objective reasons for failure to submit the application within 3 months from entering into the contract, the project activity shall be suspended and the manager shall be required to reimburse the funds spent as of the date of suspending the activity.

**Art. 38.** (1) The project manager together with the members of the project team should ensure the implementation of the indicators set for monitoring and evaluation of the research success (both quantitative and qualitative) expected in the short and long term.

(2) In a case of objective reasons preventing the project implementation, the project manager should promptly notify the Academic Organization for Clinical Trials Department.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS**

**Art. 39.** (1) MU-Varna shall report the results of the scientific and infrastructural projects according to a System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting, which shall meet the following conditions:

1. compliance with University's, regional, national and European research priorities;
2. measurability;
3. clear wording;
4. rationality of measurement.

**Art. 40.** The results of research and infrastructure projects funded by the Science Fund shall be accepted by the EC, in accordance with the System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting of Results as approved by the Rector of MU-Varna.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **PRODUCT RIGHTS**

**Art. 1** (1) The product(s), created during implementation of the projects financed by the Science Fund, if meeting the criteria for invention or a utility model, according to the current legislation, belong only and exclusively to MU-Varna and will be presented for registration by MU-Varna.

(2) The project manager and the members of the team are not allowed to provide the results and the development, subject of the project to any third parties without the written consent of MU-Varna. All results and the intellectual property created belong to MU-Varna.

(3) The product (s) created during implementation of the projects financed by the Science Fund shall be treated as an in-house invention within the meaning of Article 15 of the Patents and Utility Model Registration Act.

(4) The inventors are entitled to fair remuneration. When specifying the remuneration, the current rules and procedures at MU-Varna shall be considered as well as the contribution of the parties, as an expression of the funds invested for creating the invention, the equipment, materials, knowledge, experience, staff, labor and other assistance provided.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

**§ 1.** These regulations were adopted by a decision of the Academic Council of the Medical University - Varna on **29.03.2017** (Minutes No. 20 of 29.03.2017) and enter into force on the date of their adoption.

**§ 2.** These regulations govern the activities and procedures of the competition sessions of the Science Fund, announced after the date of their adoption.

**§ 3.** The EC shall resolve any matters not arranged in these Regulations, subject to compliance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, the Ordinance and the internal regulations in force at the University.

**§ 4.** Anywhere in these Regulations, the Ordinance should mean the ORDINANCE ON THE TERMS AND PROCEDURE FOR THE ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, ALLOCATION AND SPENDING OF FUNDS FROM THE STATE BUDGET TO FINANCE THE RELEVANT SCIENTIFIC OR ARTISTIC ACTIVITY OF THE STATE HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOOLS as adopted with a Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 233 of 10.09.2016 (promulgated in SG No. 73 of 16.09.2016).