



# REGULATIONS ON THE STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITY

*Adopted by decision of the Academic Council of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna on 29.03.2017 (Minutes No. 20/ 29.03.2017), supplemented by the Academic Council on 18.12.2017 (Minutes No. 30/ 18.12.2017), amended on 16.07.2018 (Minutes No. 37/ 16.07.2018 of the AC), amended on 15.09.2020 (Minutes No. 8/ 15.09.2020 of the AC), amended and supplemented on 25.08.2023 (Minutes No. 74/ 25.08.2023 of the AC), amended 22.04.2024 (Protocol No. 4/ 22.04.2024 of the AC), amended 16.09.2024 (Protocol No. 10/ 16.09.2024 of the AC), amended 16.12.2024 (Protocol No. 15/ 16.12.2024 of the AC), amended 07.05.2025 (Protocol No. 22/ 07.05.2025 of the AC)*

## CHAPTER 1

### GOALS AND PRIORITIES

**Article 1. The objectives** of the Fund "Science" are:

1. To stimulate the development of scientific research activities at the Medical University of Varna (MU-Varna).
2. To support the career growth of academic staff with an emphasis on doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows and young scientists.
3. *(Amended and supplemented on September 16, 2024)* To form strong multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary research teams.
4. To provide competitive funding for research projects and developments with scientific value, relevance and practical application.
5. *(Amended and supplemented on 16.09.2024)* To facilitate the conduct of high quality and competitive scientific research through the renovation and construction of modern scientific infrastructure and human resources.

**Article 2. Main activities** related to the functioning of the Fund "Science":

1. Defining the rules and requirements for funding research projects.
2. Organizing competitions for the selection of research projects.
3. Coordination of the process for evaluating received project proposals.
4. Ranking of research projects.
5. Monitoring and control of the implementation of the winning projects, in accordance with the current regulations, the "Regulation" and internal rules.

**Article 3. The fund's priorities** in terms of projects are:

1. SCIENTIFIC and/or PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION – the implementation of the project should lead to an increase in knowledge in the relevant scientific field or to an improvement in the conditions for carrying out scientific research activities.
2. RELEVANCE of the formulated problem from the point of view of modern science.
3. ORIGINALITY of the proposed scientific work.
4. INNOVATION of scientific research.
5. COMPLIANCE with the scientific priorities of MU - Varna.
6. PUBLICITY – the project should include appropriate forms to ensure popularization of the results.
7. EXPERIENCE of the leader and team in previous scientific projects.
8. PUBLICATIONS of the supervisor and the team in the relevant scientific field.
9. PARTICIPANTS – the research team should include doctoral candidates, postdoctoral fellows, young scientists or students.
10. FINANCING – ensured 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

**Article 4.** Fund "Science" is managed by the Academic Council (AC) with the assistance of an Expert Committee (EC).

**Article 5.** (1) (*Amended 07.05.2025*) The EC is appointed by the Rector, upon proposal of the councils of the main units (faculty, college, institute, department), which are submitted to the Vice-Rector "Science and Research" for a term of four years.

(2) (*Amended 07.05.2025*) In order to exclude any conflict of interest, EC members cannot apply individually or as part of a project team while they are EC members.

(3) (*New from 07.05.2025*) If they intend to apply as a team or individually, the members of the EC are obliged to notify the Vice-Rector "Science and Research" in writing within 10 days *after* the announcement of the competition session. In such a case, they leave the composition of the commission for a period until the acceptance of the result of the scientific project.

(4) (*New from 07.05.2025*) Upon submission of the application documents in the relevant competition session, the member(s) of the EC shall submit an application to leave the EC. In the event of any member leaving the Commission, a new member shall be appointed in his place upon a proposal from the council of the main unit, which shall be submitted to the Vice-Rector "Science and Research".

(5) (*New from 07.05.2025*) When issues on a project for which a member of the EC is the leader or a member of the scientific team are considered at a meeting of the EC, prior to his appointment as a member of the EC, he is obliged to recuse himself from their consideration.

**Article 6.** The EC consists of no less than 5 members who are on an employment contract at MU - Varna, including the Chairman. The Commission is assisted by a Secretary from the Science Department.

#### **Article 7. EC:**

1. Organizes, conducts and reports on competitions, including the final ranking of projects.
2. *(New from 07.05.2025)* The EC reviews the interim reports and monitors the implementation of the set goals and objectives of the projects.
3. The EC assesses the eligibility of the costs incurred for the implementation of the projects based on the submitted final reports and reviews, subject to the restrictions specified in Art. 19, para. 4 of the Regulation.
4. The EC provides full and equal access to academic staff members to materials related to its work.

**Article 8.** (1) The meetings of the EC shall be held if there is a quorum of at least half of the list members.

(2) Decisions are taken by open vote and simple majority.

(3) Minutes are kept for each meeting, which are signed by the members of the EC present and the secretary.

**Article 9.** (1) The Academic Council of MU - Varna controls the activities of the EC.

(2) *(Amended 16.07.2018)* The AC accepts the results of the competition for the respective year, according to a report from the Vice-Rector “Science and Research”.

(3) The AC determines the application guidelines and the criteria for evaluation and ranking of the projects, and in case of change they shall enter into force no later than the date of opening of the relevant competition session.

(4) *(Amended 16.07.2018)* The AC determines the amount of the subsidy that will be spent on scientific activity and for the publication of textbooks and scientific works.

(5) The AC determines the amount of the reviewers' fees, upon proposal of the EC.

**Article 10.** *(Amended 16.12.2024)* (1) The administrative service of the Fund “Science” activities is carried out by the Science Department.

(2) *(New from 16.12.2024)* Upon the proposal of the Vice-Rector “Science and Research”, the Rector may approve sample documents for individual activities of the fund, including but not limited to contracts, agreements, declarations, forms, etc.

### **CHAPTER 3**

## **CONDUCT OF A COMPETITION SESSION**

**Article 11.** (1) The competition for the selection of research projects for funding from the Fund “Science” shall be opened by order of the Rector.

(2) The opening of the procedure for an annual competition shall be no earlier than six months of the previous year.

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

**Article 12.** The Fund “Science” finances projects that correspond to the scientific priorities of MU - Varna.

**Article 13.** The projects that can be financed by the fund should be in the fields of: medicine ; dentistry; pharmacy; public health; health care; biotechnology and others, in which training of students and doctoral students is carried out. Financing is also allowed for:

1. Projects for participation in international scientific programs ;
2. (*Amended 16.07.2018*) Ongoing scientific projects (up to 10% of the scientific activity subsidy);
3. Projects for co-financing scientific forums and cultural events;
4. Infrastructure projects for the conduct of quality and competitive scientific research at MU - Varna.
5. Demonstration projects;
6. Specialized publications in refereed journals and journals with impact factor;
7. Publishing scientific papers.

**Article 14.** (*Repealed 16.09.2024*)

**Article 15.** Individual lecturers with a basic employment contract or an employment contract for additional work at the higher education institution under Art. 111 of the Labor Code, doctoral candidates, students and teams from MU - Varna may participate in the competitions for funding projects from the Fund “Science”.

**Article 16.** (1) **The head** of the research or creative team is a lecturer from the state higher education institution who holds the educational and scientific degree (OSD) "Doctor" and proven scientific competence and experience corresponding to the objectives of the project.

(2) (*Amended 07.05.2025*) A person with the ONS "Doctor" has the right to participate as a supervisor simultaneously with a large scientific project and a small scientific project or with two small scientific projects within one competition session.

(3) (*New from 07.05.2025*) If the same person is simultaneously the manager of more than three projects approved for funding in different competition sessions, and applies with more projects, the EC should rule on the person's ability to successfully manage them.

**Article 17.** (1) (*Amended 16.07.2018*) **The project team** must include: Manager and Administrative and Financial Officer.

(2) Doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, young scientists and students may participate in the project team, and their participation gives them an advantage in evaluating/approving the project.

(3) The research team under paragraph 1 may attract lecturers, researchers and doctoral students from other scientific organizations and universities.

**Article 18.** (1) (*Amended and supplemented on 15.09.2020*) **The application documents** and the method of their submission are specified in the Application Guidelines for the specific competition session.

(2) (*Amended and supplemented 16.09.2024*) The full set of application documents is submitted electronically. In the event of a decision to finance the project, the original documents will also be requested on paper.

(3) The deadline for submitting the documents is up to 1 month from the date of the announcement of the competition.

(4) *(Repealed 15.09.2020)*

**Article 19.** When planning the project budget, the following conditions must be taken into account :

1. The project budget is filled in Bulgarian LEVA.
2. Prices should be quoted inclusive of VAT.
3. When remuneration is envisaged, the employer's social security contributions should also be included in the amount.
4. The remuneration cannot exceed:
  - **35% of the project budget for the participation of doctoral students and/or young scientists.**
  - **10% of the project budget in the absence of participation of doctoral students and/or young scientists.**
5. When distributing the remuneration, at least 30% of it is planned for doctoral students and/or young scientists, if they are included in the project team.
6. The unit prices indicated in the financial plan should be in accordance with the attached current offer.
7. Costs 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 subscriptions to newspapers and non-specialized magazines;
  - for payment of fees for participation in qualification courses, computer literacy, language training, etc.;
  - for additional payment for telephones and repairs to premises (excluding infrastructure projects);
  - deductions to the state higher education institution for overhead costs in the amount of more than 10% of the total cost of the project.

## **CHAPTER 4**

## **EVALUATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF PROJECTS**

**Article 20.** (1) *(Amended 16.07.2018)* The procedure for evaluating the submitted project proposals begins with a check for administrative compliance by a technical committee appointed by order of the Rector upon the proposal of the Vice-Rector “Science and Research”. The Commission evaluates the following criteria:

1. Availability of an administrative and scientific description of a project proposal.
2. Availability of all applications specified in the Application Guidelines.
3. Compliance of the project proposal with the requirements set out in the Application Guidelines.

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

**Article 21.** Within two weeks after the deadline for submitting documents, a first meeting of the EC shall be held, at which:

1. It appoints a rapporteur from among its members for each project.
2. *(Amended and supplemented on 16.09.2024)* Makes decisions regarding the eligibility of candidates in the specific competition session. Does not allow candidates to review who have established violations in the implementation of previous and/or current projects funded by the Fund “Science” in the last three years (based on its decision, objectified in the minutes of the meeting).
3. It reviews the findings of the Technical Committee and makes subsequent decisions.

**Article 22.** (1) The rapporteur shall familiarize himself with the project proposal and select two reviewers, obtaining their consent.

(2) It is required that at least one of the reviewers does not work under a contract with MU - Varna.

(3) Members of the EC, as well as related persons, cannot be elected as reviewers. persons who are administratively subordinate or related to members of the project team.

(4) *(New from 07.05.2025)* Only scientists who have an available H-index  $\geq 3$  according to the scientific platform Web of Science can be selected as reviewers of major scientific projects.

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

**Article 24.** The rapporteur should provide detailed contact details for each of the approved reviewers (three names, institution, position, mobile or office phone number and email) to the Science Department within one week.

**Article 25.** *(Repealed 16.12.2024)*

(1) *(New from 16.12.2024)* The Science Department sends/provides the materials for review - the project proposal, its annexes and the review card to the approved reviewers.

(2) *(New from 16.12.2024)* The Science Department sends/provides the materials to the approved reviewers who do not work under a contract with MU-Varna on the basis of a concluded contract.

(3) *(New from 16.12.2024)* When the Rector has approved a sample contract with a reviewer under paragraph 2, it shall be concluded according to the sample. If the sample is not applicable to a specific case, the contract shall be coordinated with a lawyer.

**Article 26.** (1) The original documents, completed and signed, shall be sent by courier/presented to the Science Department no later than 10 days from the receipt of the materials for review.

(2) *(Repealed 15.09.2020)*

(3) In case of incorrect and incomplete content of the submitted documents, the payment of the fee may be after the deadline provided for in the contract.

**Article 27.** (1) The Science Department shall provide the received reviews to the respective rapporteur in electronic form.

(2) The rapporteur prepares a statement containing a summary of the evaluations given by the reviewers and an expressed personal position within one week of receiving the review cards.

(3) Opinions shall be sent electronically to the Science Department.

**Article 28.** (1) At a meeting of the EC, the collected reports are discussed and, if necessary, arbitrators are appointed, in case of a difference of more than 30% between the two project assessments or in case of removal of the project by one of the reviewers.

(2) If the difference in the ratings of the two reviewers exceeds 50%, the Expert Committee decides on a subsequent procedure regarding the ranking.

(3) In the final ranking, the EC has the authority to index the evaluation of the projects by up to 5% in case of compliance with the strategy and priorities of MU - Varna.

(4) (*Amended 15.09.2020*) Ranking is based on the scores given for each project proposal.

(5) (*Amended 16.07.2018*) The decisions of the EC are final and are reported to the Academic Council by the Vice-Rector "Science and Research".

(6) (*Amended 16.07.2018*) Within one week of the announcement of the results of the competition, Project managers have the right to access the reviews in the Science department, while maintaining the anonymity of the reviewers.

**Article 28 a** (*New from 25.08.2023*) It is permissible to increase project costs by up to 10% after a decision of the AC for each competition session.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

**Article 29.** (*Amended and supplemented on 16.09.2024*) (1) The contracts with the project managers who have won the competition shall be concluded within 10 days after the EC's decision on the final ranking. Their content shall comply with the regulatory requirements set out in the Regulation.

(2) (*New, 16.09.2024*) The contracts have a term of execution of one to three years.

(3) (*New, 16.12.2024*) When a sample contract with the project manager is approved by the Rector, it shall be concluded according to the sample. If the sample is not applicable to a specific case, the contract shall be coordinated with a lawyer.

**Article 30.** (1) (*Amended and supplemented on 16.09.2024*) For contracts with a term of execution exceeding one year, upon a positive opinion of the council of the main unit, **an additional agreement shall be concluded** for the following year, including an updated plan-account for the distribution of funds.

(2) (*New, 16.09.2024*) For contracts with a term of execution of less than three years, upon a positive opinion of the council of the main unit, **an additional agreement may be concluded** to extend the term, which may not exceed the three years provided for in the Regulation from the date of conclusion of the contract, including an updated plan-account for the distribution of funds.

(3) (*New, 16.09.2024*) In cases where the procedures for purchasing and delivering equipment, consumables and reagents are carried out in accordance with the Public Procurement Act and

delay the implementation of the activities set out in the project algorithm, the term of the contract shall be suspended. The project manager is obliged to promptly notify the Vice-Rector “Science and Research” in writing.

(4) (*Amended 16.07.2018*) Apart from the cases under the previous paragraph, in case the main objective of the project is not affected, a change in the budget is permissible, expressed in the transfer of funds within one budget section or a change in the agreed amount of the budget sections (when transferring funds between them), which change will not prevent the achievement of the planned results. In order to implement the change, the project manager shall promptly notify the Vice-Rector “Science and Research” in writing.

(5) (*New from 16.12.2024*) The additional agreements under para. 2 shall be concluded according to a template approved by the Rector. If the template is not applicable to a specific case, the agreement shall be coordinated with a lawyer.

**Article 31.** (1) (*Amended and supplemented on 25.08.2023*) The implementation of the projects begins with a report from the project manager with an attached Financial Plan and Technical Specification (where applicable) within two weeks of signing the contract or additional agreement.

(2) (*Added 25.08.2023*) The purchase of equipment, consumables, materials, external services and others provided for in the projects is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Public Procurement Act. and the Internal Rules for Prior Control of Legality of Financial Activities and Implementation of the Double Signature System at the Medical University - Varna. In some cases, this may require adjustment of the technical specifications.

(3) (*Amended 07.05.2025*) In case of exceeding the funds set in the financial plan, including for reasons directly dependent on the current Public Procurement Act, the project manager shall notify the Vice-Rector “Science and Research” in writing. The Vice-Rector “Science and Research” shall convene the EC to make a decision, which shall be approved by the Academic Council. In case of a decision for additional funding, an additional agreement shall be concluded with the project manager.

**Article 32.** (1) The reporting of the activity and the expenses incurred under the project is carried out according to the System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting of Results approved by the Rector of MU - Varna through interim and final reports, which are submitted to the Science Department.

(2) The interim reports are as follows:

1. Six-month report – must be prepared for the first six months by July 7 of the current calendar year.
2. Annual report – no later than December 10 of the current calendar year for projects with an implementation period of more than one year.

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

(4) (*New from 16.12.2024*) If the interim reports on the project or any of them are not submitted within one month after the expiry of the specified deadline for submission, the head and members of the scientific team are not entitled to participate in teams for submitting new project proposals under the fund's competitions until the report is submitted.



(5) *(New from 16.12.2024)* If a final project report is not submitted within three months after the expiry of the specified deadline for submission, the head and members of the scientific team are not entitled to participate in teams for submitting new project proposals under the fund's competitions for a period of three years.

(6) *(New from 16.12.2024)* In case of refusal to submit an interim or final report on the project within one month after the expiry of the deadlines specified in paragraphs 4 and 5, the head and members of the scientific team shall pay a penalty in the amount of the funds spent on the project. If no funds have been spent, the penalty shall be 20% of the total cost of the project.

(7) *(New from 16.12.2024)* In the cases of para. 6, the Science Department shall prepare a report on the funds spent, on the basis of which the penalty shall be determined.

**Article 33.** (1) After completion of each project and submission of a final report, a final reviewer shall be appointed.

(2) The final reviewer is a habilitated person outside the unit, proposed by the EC.

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

**Article 34.** The reviewer shall submit his final review to the Science Department within 30 days from the date of signing his review contract.

**Article 35.** The current and final reports are in accordance with the System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting of Results, approved by the Rector of MU - Varna.

**Article 36.** (1) The final reports and reviews are reviewed by the members of the EC, after which an assessment is made at a meeting regarding the compliance of the activities with the previously set goals and objectives, and the eligibility of the costs incurred for the implementation of the projects.

(2) The remuneration of the project team members provided for in the financial plan shall be paid within 3 months after acceptance of the final report by the EC.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DUTIES OF A PROJECT MANAGER**

**Article 37.** (1) The project manager organizes and manages the activities for the implementation of the contract, in accordance with its clauses, the requirements of the Regulation and these Regulations.

(2) A decision to terminate the project implementation period, in the presence of objective reasons, shall be taken at a meeting of the Academic Council following a proposal by the EC. In the event that the contract is terminated due to the fault of the Contractor, the Contractor shall owe the Contracting Authority a penalty, in accordance with the clauses of the contract.

(3) The Academic Council of MU - Varna shall redistribute the funds in the event of non-fulfillment of the commitments under the contracts among the remaining research teams fulfilling the obligations under the contracts.

(4) After the conclusion of the contract, the project manager is obliged to submit an application to the Commission on research ethics (in case of research work with humans) or respectively to

the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency at the Ministry of Agriculture (in case of research work with animals). In the absence of objective reasons for not submitting the application within 1 year from the conclusion of the contract, the project activity is terminated, and the manager is obliged to reimburse the funds spent as of the date of termination of the activity.

(5) *(New from 16.12.2024)* For failure to fulfill commitments under the contract with the project manager, except in the cases of Art. 32, paras. 4, 5 and 6, the teams shall pay a penalty in an amount determined by the EC and in accordance with the unfulfilled commitments under the concluded contract.

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

(2) *(Amended and supplemented 07.05.2025)* In the event of objective reasons preventing the implementation of the project, as well as in the event of termination of the employment relationship or prolonged incapacity of the principal investigator or other key team member, the manager should promptly notify the Science Department:

1. A report is submitted on behalf of the head of the scientific team to the Vice-Rector “Science and Research”, outlining the reasons hindering the implementation of the project and proposing a replacement;
2. The Vice-Rector “Science and Research” presents the report to the Expert Committee, which should present its opinion;
3. If the Expert Committee has a positive opinion, a contract is concluded with the new team leader/member;
4. In case of impossibility of appointing a new team leader/member, the project implementation will be terminated.

## **CHAPTER 7**

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

**Article 39.** (1) *(Amended 07.05.2025)* MU - Varna reports the results of scientific projects under a System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting that meet the following conditions:

1. Compliance with university, regional, national and European priorities in the field of scientific research;
2. Measurability;
3. Clear wording;
4. Rationality of measurement.

**Article 40.** *(Amended 07.05.2025)* The results of the scientific projects financed by the Fund “Science” are accepted by the EC, in accordance with the System of Indicators for Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting of Results, approved by the Rector of MU-Varna.

## CHAPTER 8

### RIGHTS ON PRODUCTS

**Article 41.** (1) The product(s) created in the implementation of the projects financed by the Fund “Science”, if they meet the criteria for an invention or utility model, according to the current legislation, belong solely to MU-Varna and will be applied for registration by MU-Varna.

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

(3) The product(s) created in the implementation of the projects financed by the Fund “Science” shall be considered an official invention within the meaning of Article 15 of the Patents and Registration of Utility Models Act (PLRA).

(4) Inventors have the right to fair remuneration. When determining the remuneration, the rules and procedures in force at MU - Varna shall be taken into account, as well as the contribution of the parties, expressed in the funds invested in creating the invention, the equipment, materials, knowledge, experience, personnel, labor and other assistance provided.

## CHAPTER 9

### TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

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

**§2.** These regulations regulate the activities and procedures of the competition sessions at the Fund “Science”, announced after the date of its adoption.

**§3 .(1)** The EC shall rule on issues not regulated in these regulations, in compliance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, the Regulation and the internal rules in force at the university.

(2) *(New from 07.05.2025)* On issues not regulated in these regulations, which are beyond the competence of the EC, a decision shall be made by the Academic Council after an opinion from the EC.

**§4.** Throughout these Regulations, the term "Regulation" shall mean the REGULATION ON THE CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EVALUATION, PLANNING, ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FROM THE STATE BUDGET FOR FINANCING THE SCIENTIFIC OR ARTISTIC ACTIVITY OF STATE HIGHER SCHOOLS, adopted by Council of Ministers Decree No. 233 of 10.09.2016 (published in the State Gazette, issue 73 of 16.09.2016).