

Announcement of the Grant Competition for Specific Research Projects for the Year 2025 and Its Principles

Art. 1

Announcement, Focus, and Objectives of the Competition

1. The Dean of the FoS UHK announces a student grant competition for specific research projects for the year 2025.
2. The objective of the student grant competition is to support research conducted by students within accredited doctoral and follow-up master's study programs, which is directly linked to their education. Through the implementation of student grants, students will have the opportunity to lead their own research activities, thereby developing key transferable skills such as project management, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, organization, time management, and more.
3. The competition is governed by the directive "**Vice-Rector's Instruction No. 04/2024**" and other legal regulations specified in Art. I and II of this instruction.

Art. 2

General Conditions of the Competition

1. Applicants must prepare their grant project proposal according to the structure outlined in the Annex to this decision, in either Czech or English. The completed proposal must be submitted to the FoS Dean's Office to the Research and Science Officer both in printed form (signed by the principal investigator) and electronically (via email to katerina.rybakova@uhk.cz). **Proposals submitted after the deadline specified in Art. 3, Paragraph 1 of this Decision will not be considered for the competition.**
2. The project must be of a purely scientific-research nature in the fields of biology, physics, chemistry, informatics, mathematics, or the didactics of these disciplines. It must have a clearly defined research objective(s) that is achievable within the project's duration. The project's outcome must include at least one publication indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database with a non-zero Article Influence Score (AIS).
3. The principal investigator of the project must be a student enrolled in a doctoral or follow-up master's study program at the FoS UHK. If the investigator is a doctoral student, their supervisor must also be a member of the research team, provided they are an academic staff member of the FoS UHK. If the investigator is a follow-up master's student, their thesis supervisor must also be a member of the research team, provided they are an academic staff member of the FoS UHK.

4. Other members of the research team may include students enrolled in doctoral or follow-up master's study programs at the FoS UHK, as well as academic, scientific, research, and development staff of the FoS UHK. The number of student members in the research team must be equal to or greater than the number of other team members.
5. A publication output is considered valid only if at least one of the student team members is a co-author and if the publication is not simultaneously attributed to another internal grant project of the FoS UHK (e.g., another specific research project at the FoS UHK, or a grant under the "Preparation of Excellent Projects at the FoS UHK" competition).
6. All project outputs must be entered into the OBD database with a link to RIV (funding category S – specific research, including the project number and the year of award). All outputs must include a project dedication (typically in the Acknowledgement section) as follows: "The author(s) is/are grateful to the project of Specific Research Faculty of Science UHK 21XX/2025 for the financial support."
7. The project duration is set at **12 months, from May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026.**
8. The structure of the project proposal is specified in Annex No. 1 of this Dean's Decision.

Art. 3

Timeline

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| 1. Submission of project proposals: | February 17, 2025 – March 10, 2025, by 11:00 AM. |
| 2. Announcement of funded projects: | After the allocation of financial resources from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports to UHK and their distribution among the faculties, but no earlier than April 15, 2025. |
| 3. Project implementation period: | May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026. |
| 4. Deadline for budget structure modification requests: | No later than October 31, 2025. |
| 5. Deadline for utilizing all financial resources: | No later than November 21, 2025. |
| 6. Deadline for submission of annual reports: | No later than January 9, 2026. |
| 7. Deadline for submission of final reports: | No later than October 30, 2026. |
| 8. Deadline for the peer review process: | No later than December 31, 2026. |

Art. 4

Evaluation Committee

1. The Evaluation Committee serves as an advisory body to the Dean in matters related to the competition and consists of nine members. Its term of office runs from March 10, 2025, to December 31, 2026.
2. The Chair of the Evaluation Committee is the Vice-Dean for Creative Activities. In the event of a change in the Vice-Dean's position during the committee's term, the Chair of the committee will also change accordingly.
3. The Dean appoints and dismisses four committee members based on recommendations from the heads of departments at the FoS. The department heads must submit their nominations for committee members to the Dean by February 28, 2025.
4. The remaining four members, appointed by the Dean, are external reviewers (not employed under a regular employment contract at FoS UHK). The first and second reviewers oversee the fields of biology and chemistry, the third covers mathematics, physics, and informatics, and the fourth specializes in the didactics of mathematics, informatics, and natural sciences.
5. The Chair of the Evaluation Committee convenes and presides over committee meetings. The Research and Science Officer of the FoS records the minutes of each meeting.
6. The Evaluation Committee is authorized to adopt resolutions if a majority of its members are present. A resolution is approved if a majority of those present vote in favor.
7. The Evaluation Committee may also conduct meetings remotely or vote via correspondence. A record of the proceedings and results of correspondence voting must be documented.
8. The Evaluation Committee:
 - a) evaluates project proposals and decides on recommendations for funding,
 - b) reviews and approves substantial requests for project modifications,
 - c) approves annual and final project reports and assesses the overall success of project implementation.

Art. 5

Types of Grant Projects and Allocation of Financial Resources

1. A total of 2.5% of the allocated financial resources will be used for organizing the grant competition, particularly to cover the personal costs of external members of the Evaluation Committee and project reviewers.
2. Applications can be submitted in this competition for:
 - a) excellent doctoral projects,
 - b) standard projects.
3. The amount proposed by the Evaluation Committee to support excellent doctoral projects should generally fall within the range of 35%–48% of the allocated financial resources.

Art. 6

Excellent Doctoral Projects

1. The members of the research team must be doctoral students of the FoS UHK, or, in some cases, master's students of the FoS UHK, who must be enrolled at the Faculty on the date of application submission and throughout the project implementation period. The applicant's (principal investigator's) supervisor must be part of the team if they are an employee of the FoS UHK. If the supervisor is an external member, another academic or research staff member of the FoS UHK, typically the applicant's consultant or another doctoral student's supervisor from the research team, must be included as a member of the team, hereinafter referred to as mentor.
2. The grant applicant must be a second- or third-year doctoral student. Each student can be awarded a maximum of one excellent doctoral project throughout all their postgraduate studies at the FoS UHK. A team member can be a first- to third-year doctoral student or a master's student.
3. The maximum number of research team members is five students (including the principal investigator) and one mentor.
4. Each student of the FoS can be a principal investigator or a team member of only one excellent doctoral project per year. The principal investigator and team members with an employment contract of 0.4 FTE or higher funded from an excellent specific research project cannot receive a scholarship from a standard project in the given year (except for scholarships supporting the quality of research presentation and fieldwork).
5. The principal investigator of an excellent doctoral project may only be replaced for serious reasons (e.g., prolonged illness, interruption/completion/termination of studies) and only by an existing team member, subject to approval by the Evaluation Committee.
6. The principal investigator must contribute to the project with a workload equivalent to 0.5 FTE. Other team members must have a workload between 0.1 and 0.5 FTE, with the total workload of all students not exceeding 1.5 FTE. The project must be team-based, meaning that at least one team member besides the principal investigator must participate with a workload of at least 0.3 FTE.
7. Students with a workload of 0.3 FTE or higher must complete at least one research or educational activity abroad (outside Slovakia) within the first eight months of the project. This activity should preferably be an active participation in a scientific conference (poster presentation or oral presentation), but a research internship or summer school is also acceptable.
8. The monthly scholarship provided in addition to the standard doctoral scholarship for team members during the period of May–December 2025 is set at 1,200 CZK per 0.1 FTE workload (e.g., 6,000 CZK per month for the principal investigator).
9. The maximum financial support for a single excellent doctoral project is 600,000 CZK.

Art. 7

Standard Projects

1. The project proposer (who, if awarded the grant, will become the principal investigator) must be a doctoral student enrolled at the FoS UHK, in the 1st to 4th year of study at the time of project submission, or a master's student at the FoS UHK. Each proposer may

submit only one project. If the supervisor is an external member, another academic or research staff member of the FoS UHK—typically the applicant’s consultant or the supervisor of another doctoral student from the research team—must be included in the team. At least one student member of the research team must remain a student of the FoS UHK, throughout the project duration.

2. The maximum number of research team members (including the principal investigator) is six.
3. The maximum total scholarship amount is set at 13,500 CZK for doctoral students and 9,000 CZK for master's students for the entire project duration.
4. The project cannot include personnel costs for employees of the FoS UHK, who are not also students. If they are also students, the scholarship limits specified in paragraph 3 apply.
5. The maximum requested project funding is set at 250,000 CZK.

Art. 8

Eligible Costs

1. Support within the grant can only be provided for activities defined in the application, and only costs specified below are eligible. Each item must be clearly specified and justified.
2. **Scholarships** for students in accordance with the Scholarship and Bursary Rules of the UHK, corresponding to Art. 6, Section 8, or Art. 7, Section 3 of this Decision.
3. **Personnel costs** for the project team members, except for students, **are not eligible costs.**
4. **Material costs** directly related to project implementation, including the consumption of materials (office or laboratory supplies) and the acquisition of minor tangible assets up to a purchase price of CZK 80,000, including VAT.
5. **Scholarships to support the quality of research presentation and fieldwork**, covering travel expenses related to project implementation (e.g., for conferences or field research). Students may request an advance payment for these costs.
6. **Travel expenses of academic and research staff.** These expenses may only be used to cover domestic travel where students also participate, and where (e.g., field) research related to the project is conducted. Covering the costs of academic and research staff who are not students for conference participation is not an eligible cost.
7. **Costs for other services and intangible expenses**, including operational costs, maintenance of assets used in project implementation, and the acquisition of minor intangible assets. Other services may also include expenses for publishing project results and conference fees.
8. Costs can only be recognized for the year 2025.
9. The financial operations authorizing officer is the head of the department where the mentor is employed (in the case of standard projects, the supervisor or thesis advisor of the principal investigator).

Art. 9

Evaluation of Submitted Applications and Project Selection Process

1. The application evaluation process consists of three stages: formal evaluation, evaluation of the success of previous specific research projects by the principal investigator, and substantive evaluation.
2. **The formal evaluation** of applications is conducted by the science and research officer of FoS UHK and consists of:
 - a) assessing whether the application contains all required components according to Annex 1 of this Decision, including the defined project outputs,
 - b) verifying compliance with the financial limits set by this Decision,
 - c) checking whether the composition of the research team meets the requirements of this Decision.
3. If formal deficiencies are found, the applicant will be asked to rectify them within five working days. If the deficiencies are not corrected within this period, the application will be excluded from the competition.
4. The Vice-Dean for Creative Activities will submit a report on the implementation of previously completed specific research projects by principal investigators to the evaluation committee at least one week before the meeting. If, in a previous specific research project, the principal investigator:
 - a) Did not report a single eligible output, 50 points will be deducted from their score (see below).
 - b) Significantly failed to meet the planned project outputs, 10–40 points will be deducted from their score, as determined by the evaluation committee.
5. For each application that passes the formal evaluation, the rapporteurs of the respective scientific field will propose two external reviewers, whose evaluations will be submitted to the evaluation committee.
6. Each reviewer will assign the project a score of 0–50 points. The substantive evaluation consists of assessing the following criteria:
 - a) Scientific significance and relevance of the selected topic (0–10 points);
 - b) Feasibility of achieving the declared goals and planned outputs (0–10 points);
 - c) Quality of the proposed project (0–5 points);
 - d) Quality of the research team (0–10 points);
 - e) Concept and methodology chosen for implementation (0–5 points);
 - f) Appropriateness of financial costs (0–10 points).
7. The scores from both reviewers are summed for all projects, and the evaluations are then submitted to the relevant rapporteur, who assigns each project an additional 0–30 points based on overall feasibility and innovative approach.

8. The evaluation committee will first assess the quality of the submitted reviews, especially for project proposals where the scores given by the two reviewers differ significantly. If a review is deemed professionally inadequate, it will be replaced by an evaluation from another external reviewer.
9. The evaluation committee will deduct any penalties under Section 4 from the total score assigned by the two reviewers and the rapporteur.
10. Based on the final scores, the committee will create separate rankings for Excellent PhD Student Projects and Standard Projects.
11. The committee will recommend funding for as many Excellent PhD Student Projects as required to meet the condition stated in Art. 5, Section 3 of this Decision.
12. From the Standard Projects, the committee will recommend funding for as many as can be covered by the allocated budget. If a project is just below the threshold for full funding, the applicant may be offered partial funding to ensure the full allocation is utilized. If the applicant declines, the next project in line will be considered.
13. The Dean will decide on the allocation of financial resources based on the committee's recommendation.
14. There is no legal entitlement to the granting of financial support for a project proposal.

Art. 10

Changes in the Project

1. During the implementation of the project, it is not possible to increase the workload allocated to the project, waive the requirement to deliver an output or conduct an international trip, or increase the grant budget.
2. A request for substantial changes must be submitted in writing to the science and research office. The request must include a description and justification of the change and details on the exact use of reallocated funds.
3. Substantial changes are only allowed upon approval by the Evaluation Committee. Substantial changes include:
 - a) Changes in project objectives, methods for achieving the objectives, and project outputs.
 - b) Changes in the principal investigator, only in serious cases (long-term illness, termination/interruption of studies).
 - c) Budget structure changes exceeding 20% of a given item and at the same time exceeding CZK 5,000. Proposed scholarships, except for "scholarships supporting the quality of research presentation and fieldwork", may not be increased during the project.
4. All other changes are considered minor.

Art. 11

Interim Annual and Final Project Report

1. Principal investigators of grant projects must submit an interim annual report once in written form to the science and research officer at the FoS UHK Dean's Office (signed by the principal investigator) and electronically via email to katerina.rybakova@uhk.cz no later than January 9, 2026 (deadline for submission of annual reports). The outline of the interim annual report is attached to this decision.
2. No later than the deadline specified in Art. 3, Section 7, each principal investigator must submit the final project report, which will be based on the interim annual report and will include updated project outputs. The outline of the final report is attached to this decision.
3. The principal investigator must present the results of their project at the FoS UHK Conference, which will take place in the spring of 2026.
4. The final evaluation of projects will be conducted by the evaluation committee after their completion. During the final review process, projects will be assessed primarily based on the degree of achievement of planned objectives and outputs, as well as compliance with the financial closure schedule. The evaluation will follow this grading scale: Grade A – Project completed without reservations. Grade B – Project partially completed but still satisfactory. Grade C – Project not satisfactorily completed. The evaluation committee will submit the assessment report to the Dean, who will confirm its validity with their signature.

This decision becomes valid and effective on the date of signing.

Hradec Králové, February 17, 2025

RNDr. Alena Myslivcová Fučíková, Ph.D.
Dean of FoS UHK

Attachments:

1. Outline of the Grant Project Proposal (Required Content)
2. Outline of the Interim Annual Report for the Grant Project, Contract No. XX
3. Outline of the Final Report for the Grant Project, Contract No. XX