



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Structural and Investing Funds  
Operational Programme Research,  
Development and Education



## Specifications

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# **Student grant competition funded by OP RDE within the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project**

**2021**



*"Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno  
CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/19\_073/0016670"*



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## Preamble

This student grant competition is funded by the Research, Development and Education Operational Programme (hereinafter referred to only as the “Operational Programme”) within the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project (abbreviated name “IGRÁČEK MENDELU”), CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/19\_073/0016670, (hereinafter referred to only as the “student grant competition”).

## Article 1 Basic provisions

- (1) These specifications relate to Rector’s Decree No. 14/2020, Rules and Principles of the Student Grant Competition.
- (2) The goal of the student grant competition at Mendel University in Brno (hereinafter referred to only as the “University”) is to support the research projects of students in doctoral study programmes (these projects shall hereinafter be referred to only as “student grant projects”).
- (3) The student grant competition is announced at university level, and only in the form of two-year student grants for teams.
- (4) Submission of student grant projects will be performed via the EPZ (Project and Order Records) web application at the address <https://grantovesouteze.mendelu.cz>.
- (5) The application for the student grant will be drawn up and submitted in English.
- (6) The student grant competition is intended exclusively for students in an accredited doctoral study programme at the university (hereinafter referred to only as “Ph.D. students”). Only Ph.D. students who are in the first or second year of their studies at the time of submission of the student grant project may participate in the competition.
- (7) The proposer, after approval of the grant in the role of *principal investigator of the student grant project*, and the other applicants, after approval of the grant in the role of *co-investigators of the student grant project*, must be Ph.D. students at MENDELU at the moment of the submission of the proposal and for the whole period of execution of the student grant project.
- (8) The research and development areas (Frascati manual, 2015) included in the student grant competition are as follows:
  - a) natural sciences,
  - b) engineering and technology,
  - c) agricultural and veterinary sciences,
  - d) social sciences,
  - e) humanities and arts.



- (9) The university office responsible for ensuring administration of the student grant competition is the Research and Development Office (hereinafter referred to only as the “R&D Office”), specifically the Competition Office established for this purpose.
- (10) The same rules for evaluation, selection and checks on student grant projects apply to all participants in the student grant competition within the framework of this call.

## Article 2 Schedule

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| Start of the period for submission of student grant projects via the EPZ web application        | <b>4 January 2021 at 9:00 a.m.</b>       |
| End of the period for submission of student grant projects via the EPZ web application          | <b>16 February 2021 at 15:59:59 p.m.</b> |
| Checking the meeting of formal criteria and evaluation of applications by reviewers             | 17 February 2021 – 25 March 2021         |
| Meeting of the Grant Board, drawing up a list of student grant projects recommended for funding | 25 March – 31 March 2021                 |
| Start of execution of the student grant projects  | <b>1 April 2021</b>                      |
| Ongoing monthly activity reports  | 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2023             |
| End of execution of the student grant projects  | 31 March 2023                            |
| Evaluation process, defence of the student grant projects which have been executed              | 3 April 2023 – 1 May 2023                |

## Article 3 Student grant team

- (1) The team is made up of the principal investigator (the main person responsible for submission and subsequent execution of the student grant project), four co-investigators and a mentor.
- a) Principal investigator:
1. The principal investigator is a student in a doctoral study programme at the university who submits the application for the student grant in his/her own name together with the co-investigators. He/she is responsible for coordination and management of the student grant project team and for the achievement of the outputs of the student grant project.



2. The obligatory level of workload of the principal investigator of the student grant project corresponds to the equivalent of 0.5 of a full-time workload, i.e. a twenty-hour workload at the university per week.
  3. While carrying out the project, the principal investigator must perform at least one educational or research activity abroad, this in particular being understood to mean a short-term stay, summer school, visiting scholarship or active participation in a conference. Educational or research activity may be performed in the countries of the European Union, and in exceptional cases, also outside of these countries. If the research activity is performed in a country with an official language which the student understands without learning this language, e.g. for a Czech or Slovak student in Slovakia, then at least part of the research activity must be performed in a foreign language (e.g. presentation of a paper, text of a study).
- b) Co-investigators:
1. The co-investigators of the student grant project are four students in a doctoral study programme at the university who are listed in the proposal for the student grant project submitted by the principal investigator and who participate in the execution of the student grant project under the leadership of the principal investigator.
  2. The level of workload of the co-investigators of the student grant project corresponds to the equivalent of 0.2 of a full-time workload per person, i.e. an eight-hour workload in the university per week.
  3. The co-investigators express their consent to participation in the execution of the grant project via the EPZ web application.
- c) Mentor:
1. The student grant project must involve participation of a mentor, i.e. a researcher or academic worker at the university with at least the academic qualification of Ph.D. or its equivalent.
  2. The mentor provides specialist and methodological support to the investigators of the student grant project during its preparation and subsequently during its execution.
  3. Each student grant project has one mentor.
  4. The mentor is chosen by the principal investigator. The mentor expresses his/her consent to acceptance of the role of mentor via the EPZ web application.
  5. The principal investigator attaches the mentor's signed CV to the grant application, where mention is made of at least 3 major scientific research activities performed by the mentor over the past 5 years relating to the issue set out in the proposal for the student grant project.



6. The mentor signs the activity report and final activity report.
7. He/she provides statement regarding request by the principal investigator for any changes whilst executing the grant project.
8. He/she discusses the use of funds with the principal investigator.

#### **Article 4** **Proposal for the student grant project**

- (1) The proposal for the student grant project is submitted in **English** via the EPZ web application at <https://grantovesouteze.mendelu.cz> using the grant application. All of the information stated in the proposal must correspond to the facts valid on the date of submission of the grant application.
- (2) By submitting the grant application, the principal investigator and the co-investigators agree to processing of personal data, in particular data provided via the EPZ web application.
- (3) The duration of the student grant project is 24 months.
- (4) A student grant cannot be awarded for a topic which is identical to the topic of the principal investigator's dissertation or to that of the co-investigators. The principal investigator and the co-investigators affirm this fact in the grant application, and it is also confirmed by the signatures of the mentor and the head of the principal investigator's institute within the proposal of the student grant project in the grant application. However, the Ph.D. student may use the results or outputs of the grant project (i.e. results of measuring) in his/her dissertation. It is also possible for Ph.D. students to meet partial obligations from their individual study plan using outputs from the student grant project (e.g. publication activity, active participation in a conference, etc.). However, the output of the student grant project must not be the dissertation as a whole.
- (5) One Ph.D. student may, at any given moment in time, be an investigator (principal or co-investigator) of only one student grant financed within the framework of the student grant competition funded by the Operational Programme within the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project.
- (6) The grant application which is submitted includes the consent of the mentor and other investigators to participation in the student grant project.
- (7) The grant application must include:
  - a) Identification of the proposer in the role of the principal investigator (hereinafter referred to only as the "principal investigator"), other proposers in the role of co-investigators (hereinafter referred to only as "co-investigators") and the mentor, including their consent to participation in the



- execution of the student grant project and provision of a professional CV (including the principal investigator's, co-investigators' and mentor's publication activity to date);
- b) Annotation, objective, keywords, description of the student grant project and research team, the chosen procedures/methods, and planned activities abroad;
  - c) Summary of the educational objectives of the principal investigator and co-investigators;
  - d) Expected outputs and results of the submitted student grant project;
  - e) Budget for the student grant project, including its justification.
- (8) The proposer, who becomes the principal investigator after acceptance of the student grant project, submits the student grant project proposal within the competition deadline using the grant application electronic form via the EPZ web application and in printed format with the required attachments by 16 February 2021 by 15:59:59 p.m. to the Competition Office. All the documents must be enclosed in an envelope labelled "Student grant competition – DO NOT OPEN" with identification of the submitter. The date and time of delivery of the electronic form via the EPZ web application is decisive for the competition deadline.

## **Article 5** **Funding of the student grant project**

- (1) The maximum level of support for the execution of one student grant project is CZK 2,491,632.00 for a 24-month investigation period.
- (2) Financial support for the student grant project may only be provided for eligible expenditure:
  - a) Costs for coverage of staffing costs of the principal investigator and co-investigators in the form of scholarships:
    - Ph.D. Students propose student grant projects for teams, where the principal investigator will have the equivalent of 0.5 of a full-time workload/month (CZK 23,335.00/month) and the four co-investigators will work at a level of the equivalent of 0.2 of a full-time workload/month (CZK 9,334.00/month).
  - b) Coverage of other expenses:

Other expenses for one student grant project for the whole period of its execution (24 months) amount to at most CZK 1,035,528.00 and will be used to:

    - 1. Cover other costs, such as the obligatory 10-day short-term stay abroad by the principal investigator, individual education of the investigators participating in the student grant project, travel expenses and fees for professional conferences, minor tangible assets (e.g. laptops, small laboratory instruments, etc.), services, chemicals and material.



2. Fee for the mentor – in the form of an agreement to complete a job in the amount of CZK 4,500.00/month or bonus within the framework of main employment at the university in the amount of CZK 6,021.00/month. The mentor cannot be remunerated using a bonus within the framework of main employment pertaining to a workload which is paid for from another project in the Operational Programme.
- (3) Costs which are not specified in Art. 5. Financing of the student grant project, point 2, are not eligible.
- (4) Rules of funding:
- a) the principal investigator is responsible for due, expedient and economical use of allocated funds;
  - b) funds for the execution of the student grant project are provided on the basis of a contract concluded by the principal investigator and the university;
  - c) student grants are managed under the valid code determined by the Finance Office;
  - d) the principal investigator of the student grant approves own signature on the documents on all expenditures of the approved budget;
  - e) increase in the total budget for the student grant project after the grant has been awarded is not permitted;
  - f) while executing the student grant project, combination of sources of financing is prohibited (e.g. with a source of special-purpose support for specific university research);
  - g) when drawing funds from budget items for other costs (Art. 5, para. 2 b), it is possible to move funds between these items over the course of each calendar year of the execution of the project, but only after timely written submission of a request to do so to the Competition Office and its approval by the grant board;
  - h) if the student grant project does not meet the parameters set by the specifications (for example, if the principal investigator does not conduct a research/educational activity abroad; if the principal investigator and co-investigators do not participate in at least three educational courses implemented by the R&D Office within the framework of the Operational Programme under the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project; if the project does not achieve the outputs declared in the grant application; or if the student grant project is terminated prematurely, e.g. due to the fact that the principal investigator terminates his/her doctoral studies, and no change is requested and approved), the unit costs for the last month of the execution of the student grant project of all investigators will be deemed ineligible and will be charged to the institute which the mentor of the given student grant project pertains to.



## **Article 6** **Evaluation of the student grant project**

- (1) The governing and executive body of the student grant competition is the Grant Board (hereinafter referred to only as the “Board”).
- (2) Formal evaluation of proposals for student grant projects is performed by the Competition Office.
- (3) If a proposal for a student grant project has any formal failings, the competition will ask the proposer to remedy them within 5 calendar days. If he/she fails to do so, the Competition Office will propose that the Board disqualify the proposal for the student grant project from the competition.
- (4) In the event of the topic of a student grant project being identical to the dissertation topic of the investigators, the grant application will be disqualified from the competition.
- (5) For each submitted grant application, the Board will appoint two external reviewers from the database of evaluators to perform the initial evaluation of the grant application and prepare a statement using the prescribed form (a specimen is available at <http://optc.mendelu.cz>). The statement will then be available to the Board during its evaluation of the student grant project.
- (6) The reviewer (i.e. a specialist with the appropriate professional profile and experience) must not be a member of a project team, must not participate in the preparation of a proposal for a student grant project, must not have any other conflict of interest and must not at the time of evaluation of the grant project (in the given month) be in an employment relationship with the university (the reviewer states this fact in the database of evaluators). An exception to this is constituted by employment relations the subject of which is the evaluation of student grant projects within the framework of other grant competitions at the university.
- (7) The reviewer performs the evaluation according to the determined criteria, in which all of the items of the grant application will be taken into account:
  - a) the quality of the proposed student grant project, including the stated outputs;
  - b) the quality of the student grant project team, especially the proposer and mentor;
  - c) the scientific relevance and topicality of the chosen topic;
  - d) the feasibility of the objectives of the student grant project;
  - e) the concept and methodology chosen for the investigation;
  - f) the adequacy of the financial costs.
- (8) If the evaluation of the two reviewers differs significantly and if the Board so decides, the proposal shall be sent to a third reviewer who will issue his/her independent statement on the proposal.
- (9) The statements are entered into the EPZ web application by the Competition Office.
- (10) The statements (weaknesses and strengths of the proposal for the student grant project) are available to the project team in the EPZ web application.





- (11) The evaluation of the proposals for student grant projects will be performed in four departmental evaluation panels – A, B, C and D – created by specified scientific areas referred to in Art. 1 para. 8.
- a) Panel A comprises the following scientific areas: Chemistry, Agricultural Botany, Life Sciences, Ecology and Environmental Protection, Waste Technology, Food Technology, Phytotechnology, Zootechnics, Agricultural Specialisation, Phytomedicine
  - b) Panel B comprises the following scientific areas: Forest Botany, Wood Engineering, Furniture Creation Processes, Landscape Engineering, Applied Geoinformatics, Forest Engineering, Forest Economics and Management, Forest Phytology, Forest Management, Forest Phytopathology and Mycology, Material Engineering of Wood, Forest Protection and Game Management, Techniques and Technology of Forestry Processes
  - c) Panel C comprises the following scientific areas: Economic Policy and Management, Economics and Management, System Engineering and IT, Automation of Management and IT
  - d) Panel D comprises the following scientific areas: Landscape Architecture, Horticulture, Horticultural Engineering, Horticultural and Landscape Architecture
- (12) Final evaluation of the resulting order of proposals for student grant projects will be performed by the Board on the basis of the total number of points from both reviewers' statements. If a third reviewer participated in the evaluation, the points of the third reviewer and the statement which his/her points were closest to will be added up. The order of accepted student grant projects and list of student grant projects recommended for funding will be approved by the Board by vote. While evaluating proposals, the Board is entitled to reduce the proposed budget.
- (13) The accepted student grant projects will be funded in the order voted for and approved by the Board, up to the amount of the financial support provided by the Operational Programme within the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project.
- (14) The order of accepted student grant projects will be published on the website of the R&D Office: <http://optc.mendelu.cz>.
- (15) The Competition Office will inform the principal investigator of the result of the evaluation of the student grant project, i.e. whether the grant has been awarded or not.

## Article 7

### Obligatory reporting of monthly activity of the student grant project team

- (1) An activity report using the specimen available at <http://optc.mendelu.cz> must be drawn up in writing for each month of execution of the student grant project by the principal investigator and co-investigators as at the last day of the month. The activity reports must be signed by the investi-



gator and the mentor. The report is handed over in paper format to the Competition Office which approves it. A scan of the signed activity reports for the co-investigators is also entered by the principal investigator into the EPZ web application.

- (2) The activity report shall in particular contain the following:
- activities performed over the given month;
  - level of work capacity of the investigators for the given month, expressed as workload;
  - evaluation of progress towards the achievement of the outputs;
  - activity plan for the following period – for the next month;
  - summary of the activities of the co-investigators, which is *drawn up only by the principal investigator*.

## **Article 8**

### **Execution and ending of the student grant project**

- Changes over the course of execution of the project must be reported to the Competition Office which will discuss them with the Board.
- The Board must be informed by the principal investigator in writing in advance of any and all intended changes compared to the originally approved application, if such occur during the research period. Proposed changes will be discussed by the Board, which will recommend their acceptance or rejection. The Competition Office will subsequently notify the principal investigator of the student grant project of the decision of the Board without unnecessary delay.
- All changes to student grant projects must be made in such a way that at each stage of the student grant project they comply with all the provisions of the relevant generally binding regulations, and internal and other regulations of the university.
- Publication outputs must include reference to the respective student grant supported by the Operational Programme within the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project, CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/19\_073/0016670, and the allocated registration number of the student grant.
- The results of the research will be reported in the personal bibliography database system (OBD) via the form for reporting the creation of a research and development output.
- The principal investigator and the co-investigators will actively participate in educational activities such as workshops, courses, seminars and training, etc. The principal investigator and the co-investigators have to participate in at least three of the educational courses implemented by the R&D Office within the framework of the Operational Programme under the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project.



- (7) Once the execution of the student grant project has ended, the principal investigator will submit a final report in writing about the activities performed, including the final financial statement as at the last day of the execution of the student grant project, this being done using the prescribed form in accordance with the specimen available at <http://optc.mendelu.cz>. The final report is signed by the principal investigator, the co-investigators of the student grant project, the mentor and the Competition Office. The final activity report shall contain in particular the following:
- description of the execution of the grant project;
  - outputs achieved, both educational, i.e. in particular confirmation of the completion of an activity abroad, certificates from educational activities performed, etc., as well as publication outputs; these will usually have the form of the number and type of outputs which must correspond to the outputs specified in the grant application;
  - the activities of the co-investigators;
  - meeting of the educational objectives specified in the grant application;
  - from the position of the mentor: summary of mentored activities, including evaluation of the execution of the student grant project, knowledge gained and outputs produced, recommendations for further research activity of the Ph.D. student.
- (8) The Board will organise final review proceedings for the student grant projects based on the submitted final activity reports. A final evaluation report will be drawn up regarding the course of the review proceedings. The result of the review proceedings will be published for each student grant project in the EPZ web application.
- (9) When evaluating the success of a student grant project, the Board will place particular emphasis on the proper use of the entrusted funds and on the published results of the student grant project.
- (10) After the completion of the execution of the student grant project, the assets acquired using the grant funds will be transferred to the university section to which the principal investigator of the student grant project belongs, unless specified otherwise in advance.
- (11) If the Board evaluates a student grant project as unsuccessful, i.e. it determines that the outputs and objectives of the grant project have not been achieved, costs for the last month of the execution of the project shall become ineligible and shall be borne by that section of the university to which the principal investigator's or the mentor workplace pertains.
- (12) Documentation of the results of the execution of the project and of the review proceedings, i.e. the final report on the execution of the student grant project, the statement on the management of funds, the evaluations, and the report on final review proceedings will be kept in the Competition Office in accordance with the rules of the provider of the Operational Programme within the Internal Grant Schemes of Mendel University in Brno project.



## **Article 9** **Changes to the student grant project**

- (1) Changes are classified as major and minor:
  - a) Major changes:
    1. Change of the principal investigator – over the course of the execution of the student grant project, it is only permissible to replace the principal investigator of the project by a co-investigator of the given project, and that only due to serious reasons; co-investigators may be replaced by other Ph.D. students studying at the university.
    2. Change of the mentor.
    3. Change to the outputs of the student grant project.
  - b) Minor changes:
    1. Change to the location of the foreign trip in the European Union or, in exceptional cases, outside the European Union.
    2. Other changes not listed among the major changes above.
- (2) Request for change is submitted in writing to the Competition Office immediately after learning of facts leading to such change; however, no later than the month before the planned change. A request for a major change is approved by the Board. A request for a minor change is approved by the Competition Office.
- (3) The investigator is obliged to state all major and minor changes, including their justification, in the activity report or in the final activity report.
- (4) Neither major nor minor changes during the execution of the project may be used by the principle investigator to increase or reinstate specific budget items which were reduced or cancelled by a decision of the Board.