



Competitive procedure to fund University Research Projects - European Research Council - ERC UNICAM, under the fundings of Ministerial Decree no. 737 of 25-06-2021 "Criteria for allocating and using the Fund for the promotion and development of the policies of the National Research Program (PNR)" Directorial decree no. 2243 of 24 September 2021 - Request ID: DM7370SUIV - Intervention b. Research initiatives preparatory to the submission of research projects under the first pillar of the EU framework programme for research and innovation "Horizon Europe"

Art. 1 - Definitions

For the purposes of this Procedure (hereinafter also referred to as the "Call"), the following definitions shall apply:

- ERC: European Research Council – Horizon Europe;
- ERC domains: LS (Life Sciences), PE (Physical Sciences and Engineering), and SH (Social Sciences and Humanities), and the related fields and disciplines, the reference panel structure of the ERC, in the version in force at the date of submission of the project proposals;
- Experts: Independent experts identified by the CNVR (Italian National Research Evaluation Committee) for project evaluation, pursuant to Art. 64 of the Decree-Law of 31 May 2021, No. 77, converted, with modifications, by Law of 29 July 2021, No. 108;
- Principal Investigator (hereinafter also referred to only as "PI"): The researcher responsible for coordinating the research activities conducted within the project and the related team;
- Proponent: the Principal Investigator submitting the project proposal;

Art. 2 -Purpose

In view of promoting the participation of University's researchers in the funding opportunities offered by the ERC programme, through this Call, two (2) candidates will be selected, who will have the opportunity to implement a set of preparatory actions to make their CV and their project idea competitive in view of submitting an application under the Call for the ERC Starting Grant or Call for the ERC Consolidator Grant in the framework of Horizon Europe.

The focus of action will be on young researchers, promoting and encouraging the acquisition of skills aimed at participating in the ERC Starting Grant or ERC Consolidator Grant (Horizon Europe).

In particular:

- Drafting a "High risk-High gain" scientific proposal that has the characteristics needed to compete at the European level;
- Improving the quality of young researchers' CVs (track record);
- Ability to independently make impactful international publications.

Art. 3 - Eligible subjects

1. The subjects eligible for submission of a project proposal are the PIs of any nationality, who have already been contracted by the University of Camerino at the time of submission of the project proposal and at the time of the project's starting. The subjects eligible for the grant referred to in this Call must have one of the following contractual forms with the University of Camerino:

- RTD/A (Junior Fixed-Term Researcher)



- RTD/B (Senior Fixed-Term Researcher)
- Research grant
- Scholarships
- Research grants
- Scholarships
- Research fellowships
- Collaboration contract (only if related to research activities)

2. The following apply for participation: Candidates who have obtained their PhD no longer than 5 years ago prior to the opening date of this Call (for the Starting Grant), and no longer than 10 years ago (for the Consolidator Grant).

If the PI holds more than one doctoral degree or equivalent title, calculation of the time elapsed since the award shall refer to the earliest title that makes the applicant eligible. For the purposes of calculating time elapsed since the award of the eligible title, the award date of the doctoral degree (or medical specialisation) shall mean the date of discussion of the thesis.

Art. 4 - Areas of intervention, characteristics of projects, specific requirements to access the call for proposals procedure and funding

1. Project proposals may cover all research fields relating to the domains and scientific disciplinary fields included in the ERC, including related sectors and sub-sectors referring to the latest version of the ERC panel structure at the date of project proposals' - indicated on the dedicated webpage: https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_Panel_structure_2021_2022.pdf

2. Principal Investigator (PI) Profile

- Doctoral degree or specialisation in the medical sector

Researchers at the beginning of their career, who have obtained their PhD or Medical Specialisation degree no longer than 5 years prior to the date of publication of this Call (for Starting Grant), and no longer than 10 years prior to the date of publication of this Call (for Consolidator Grant), with a potential for scientific independence, which must be highlighted in the proposal.

Eligibility periods may be extended in the case of adequately documented career interruptions occurred within the time limit referred to in ERC Starting Grant 2022 Call (See table on page 28 of the [Work Programme 2022](#)). In this respect, the following circumstances are admissible for the extension of the eligibility periods:

- Maternity or paternity leave (18 months extension of the time limit set for the first PhD award for each child born before or after obtaining the Doctoral Degree);
- Long-term illness (more than ninety days for the Principal Investigator or a close family member) (after the award of the Doctoral Degree);
- Clinical training (after the award of the first eligible qualification, and up to a maximum of 4 years);
- National service (after the award of the PhD degree).

All these circumstances must be properly documented. Examples of such documents are shown below:

- For maternity leave: Birth certificate(s) or passport(s) of the child/children, family book or any other official document linking the mother and the child (children). For extension requests of more than 18



months per child, an official document signed by the employer must be presented certifying the start and end date(s) of each leave. Each document should mention the reason for the leave. If the leave was taken as part-time leave, this must be indicated. It is acceptable that free time is spent over several periods of time.

- For paternity leave: An official document signed by the employer certifying the start and end date(s) of each leave; An official document proving the PI's right to social paternity benefits shall also be accepted. Each document should mention the reason for the leave. If the leave was taken as part-time leave, this must be indicated. It is acceptable that free time is spent over several periods of time.

- For clinical training: an official document signed by the employer (usually a hospital) certifying the start and end dates of each training period. Each document should mention the type of training. If the training had been conducted on a part-time basis, this should be indicated. It is acceptable that the training took place over several periods of time, and for different clinical specialties.

- For long-term illness (more than ninety days for the PI or a close family member, such as a child, spouse, parent, or brother/sister):

○ For the PI: An official document signed by the employer certifying the start and end date(s) of each leave, or a medical record indicating the incapacity for work with the start and end date(s) of the period of illness. Each document should mention the reason for the leave. If the leave was taken as part-time leave, this must be indicated. It is acceptable that the time off work took place over several periods, as long as the leave was related to the same illness or condition.

○ For assistance to close family members: An official document signed by the employer certifying the start and end date(s) of each leave. Each document should mention the reason for the leave. If the leave was taken as part-time leave, this must be indicated. It is acceptable if the leave from work occurred over several periods of time, as long as the leave was related to the same illness or condition. In addition, the request should be supported by an official document explaining the long-term nature of the applicant's or close family member's illness or condition (for example, from a hospital, physician, or insurance company). The supporting documents should also prove the family link in the event that the request for extension concerns the care of a seriously ill close family member.

- For national service: A document signed by the official authority with the start and end date of the service

● Scientific independence and track record (Starting Grant)

The PI must show that they have the potential to achieve full independence in the research activity, and must give evidence of their scientific maturity, showing that they have produced at least one major publication as the main author or without the participation of a PhD tutor.

The Principal Investigator must be able to show a promising track record, giving evidence, in the proposal, of the following:

Mandatory requirements:

- At least one publication, as co-author, of contributions to peer-reviewed edited volumes or monographs relevant to the project proposal research field;

- At least one presentation (on invitation) in well-established conferences, including international ones, and in internationally renowned schools;

Additional non-mandatory requirements:



- Publications as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor, in major international peer-reviewed scientific journals, including multidisciplinary scientific journals;
- Patents;
- Recognitions of scientific results including international awards;
- Periods abroad and international collaborations.

- Scientific independence and track record (Consolidator Grant)

The PI must have already demonstrated research independence and evidence of scientific maturity, for example, by having produced several major publications as main author, or without the participation of the PhD tutor.

The Principal Investigator must be able to demonstrate a promising track record appropriate to her/his research field, including significant publications (as main author) in major international, peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary scientific journals, or major scientific journals. The proposal must contain evidence of the following:

Mandatory requirements:

- At least three publications, as co-author, of contributions to peer-reviewed edited volumes or monographs relevant to the project proposal research field;
- At least three presentations (on invitation) in well-established conferences, including international ones, and in internationally renowned schools;

Additional non-mandatory requirements:

- Publications, as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor, in major international peer-reviewed scientific journals, including multidisciplinary scientific journals;
- Patents;
- Recognitions of scientific results including international awards;
- Periods abroad and international collaborations.

All requirements will be evaluated.

Art.5 - Maximum grant and project duration

1. Projects selected will be awarded a grant for the total eligible costs for up to a maximum amount of € 75.000,00 (per single project) and, therefore, the first two project proposals in the evaluation ranking will be financed. The disbursement of the grant is exempt from the University retention percentages and the grant will be paid at 100% at the time of starting phase. The University, given the budget availability, with a special provision approved by the UNICAM Board, reserves the right to finance one further proposal if there are highly qualified project proposals submitted.

2. The minimum duration of the project is 14 months while the maximum duration is 18 months from the start date of the project which will be determined by the Decree of admission to financing and, in any case, it will be no later than 31 October 2022.

The funding is an Individual Grant (it is not a collaborative research) and is assigned to the PI, who must guarantee the correct implementation of the project proposal within the terms indicated in the project design phase, and in accordance with the limits established by this Call. The PI will have to independently



manage the research and the funding received, for the entire duration of the project. Any amount not spent and not reported will return to the availability of the University.

The granting of project extensions beyond 18 months is not foreseen. The PIs of the awarded projects undertake to submit a project proposal under the Horizon Europe - ERC Starting Grant or ERC Consolidator Grant funding scheme by 2024.

Art.6 - Eligible costs

1. The grant may be awarded for up to 100% of total eligible costs.
2. Project eligible costs shall relate to the costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to implement the proposed research activities, provided they are in line with eligibility criteria set out in this call. The following cost items are eligible (non-exhaustive list):
 - Publications, as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor, in major international peer-reviewed scientific journals, including multidisciplinary scientific journals;
 - Publications, as co-author, of contributions to peer-reviewed edited volumes or monographs relevant to the project proposal research field;All publications are to be understood as Open Access publications.
 - Research monographs;
 - Presentations (on invitation) in well-established conferences, including international ones, and in internationally renowned schools;
 - Patents;
 - Participation in contests related to awards relating to scientific activities;
 - Research experiences abroad and participation in training events abroad, provided they are specifically incurred for the purposes of the project and are strictly related to the presentation of a project proposal under the ERC Starting Grant or Consolidator Grant Call (Horizon Europe). This expenses must be previously authorised by the Director of the School to which the candidate belongs;
 - Costs for technical consulting services used exclusively for the purposes of the project proposal designing under the ERC Starting Grant or Consolidator Grant (Horizon Europe);
 - Laboratory expenses and consumables not exceeding 35% of the Grant and strictly related to the obtention of useful data for relevant publications;
 - Renewal of the job position that the candidate had at the start date of the project and which expires during the project's implementation. The cost of the job's position renewal to be charged to the project will be up to the end of the project itself and for a maximum of € 25,000.00;
3. Expenses are eligible if incurred as of Project start date and they can be paid within 30 days of the project deadline.

Art.7 - Submission and Processing of Applications

1. The application shall be submitted by the PI, who holds the scientific responsibility for the project. Applications must be submitted in English, or shall be otherwise excluded as inadmissible, and using the dedicated Forms. The forms consist of Part A and Part B.

Part A:



Part A consists of 4 documents to be filled out (all mandatory)

1. Presentation of the scientific proposal (Form A_1)
2. Ethics Statement and Ethical Issues (Form A_2)
3. PI's Curriculum Vitae (Form A_3)
4. Track record accompanied by ORCID, SCOPUS ID, or Researcher ID, for the domains in which applicable (Form A_4)

Part B:

Part B consists of 2 documents to be filled out (all mandatory)

1. Budget template (Form B_1)
2. GANNT (Free form)

2. Project proposals must be sent, under penalty of exclusion:

- In a single PDF format file;
- No later than the mandatory deadline, under penalty of inadmissibility, at 11:59 p.m. on the thirtieth day starting from the day following the date of publication of the Call;
- By e-mail, to the following e-mail address: area.ricerca@unicam.it;
- The subject line of the email must specifically bear the following wording: ERC Unicam Call - Name and Surname of the PI;

3. The University accepts no liability for the loss of, or delayed receipt of communications due to incorrect or incomplete indication of the email address by the applicant, nor for any computer errors attributable to third parties, unforeseeable circumstances or force majeure.

4. The University shall not be liable for failure or incomplete submission of proposals within the time limits set. Once the proposal has been completed and submitted, no further corrections or resubmissions will be possible. Incomplete proposals (where parts or sections of the proposal are missing) will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated. Nonetheless, the University reserves the right to request clarification regarding the documentation submitted.

Art.8 - Evaluation Committee

A specific Committee that will form the Unicam Advisory Group will be appointed by Rector's Decree. The Committee may decide whether to proceed autonomously with the evaluation of the projects, or to avail itself of the collaboration of other experts that the Committee will identify. The Commission may rely on the support of the relevant office for the investigation and appointment of external experts.

Art. 9 - Evaluation Criteria

The project proposals received shall be considered inadmissible if they are:

- a) received after the submission deadline;
- b) not sent by e-mail;
- c) not containing the full required documentation.



The Evaluation Committee, as defined in art. 8, will select two (2) candidates on the basis of the following evaluation criteria:

1. Excellence of the project idea in terms of level of innovation of the proposal in relation to the state of the art and degree of interdisciplinarity, where relevant (50/100 of the evaluation score);
2. Quality of the scientific profile of the PI Curriculum Vitae (25/100 of the evaluation score);
3. Quality of the methodology and of the roadmap with which the PI intends to enhance his/her CV, and the scientific research idea for the benefit of greater competitiveness in view of the Horizon Europe - ERC Starting Grant Call or Consolidator Grant Call in which the candidate must participate (25/100 of the evaluation score).

The minimum score required for admission is 80/100. In the event of equal scores, preference will be given to the youngest candidate.

Art.10 - Approval of acts and conclusion of the procedure

Upon completion of the evaluation operations, the committee will proceed to form a final ranking and consequently the office will verify the contractual position of the candidate on the date of approval of the ranking. The procedure will therefore end with the communication of the candidates admitted to participate and will be communicated online on the dedicated Unicam web page. Candidates must confirm their participation no later than the following 7 working days. In the event of failure to communicate, the ranking positions will be scrolled.

Art.11 - Disbursement of the contribution

The University provides the beneficiaries with the contribution due for each project eligible for funding in an advance payment equal to 100% of the grant granted.

Art.12 - Obligations of PIs / Members of Research Groups involved in the Funded Projects

Research results must be published in open access format and the PI and the members of the research group must affix the logo of the European Union and the following wording "Funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU", and mention, in order of priority, the programme "Ministry of University and Research - Promotion and Development Fund – Ministerial Decree No. 737/2021, the acronym, and title of the project. Members of the research group undertake to comply, in the proposed activities, with the regulations in force regarding the right to privacy and the right to the protection of the personal data of the parties involved. In particular, each of them undertakes to comply with the Deontological Regulations for data processing for statistical or scientific research purposes, published pursuant to art. 20, paragraph 4, of Legislative Decree No. 101/2018, and with the requirements contained in the general authorizations in specific matters, pursuant to art. 21 of the same Legislative Decree.

Art.13 - Revocation, Forfeiture and Penalties

1. The contribution awarded will be revoked and beneficiaries will incur in the full forfeiture of the grant if they do not comply with all the instructions and obligations contained in the Procedure and if any of the following conditions occur:



- a) the declarations made and signed in the contribution application are false;
- b) the implementation of the intervention is not in line with what is declared in the project accepted for funding;
- c) the planned activity is not carried out within the deadlines indicated for the completion of the projects;
- d) the beneficiary does not submit all the documentation requested in the reports.

2. In the event of forfeiture or revocation, if the grant has already been paid, the beneficiary must return the sums received through his research group or school.

3. If beneficiaries wish to withdraw from the contribution and/or the project, they must notify the University writing to: area.ricerca@unicam.it

4. The grant has no rights to portability.

Art.14 - Data Processing

Pursuant to art. 5 of the European Regulation GDPR 679/2016, the personal data transmitted by the candidates within the applications to participate in the selection procedure shall be processed for institutional purposes and in compliance with the legislation on the protection of personal data, which is based on principles of lawfulness, fairness and transparency, and necessity for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. In particular, such data will be processed, also with the aid of electronic means, by persons specifically appointed for the purposes related to the management of this administrative procedure, and of the legal obligations provided for. The data controller is Prof. Claudio Pettinari, Rector and legal representative of the University of Camerino, domiciled for this position in Piazza Cavour 19/F, 62032 Camerino (MC); Certified e-mail: Protocol@pec.unicam.it; Tel. 0737/402003. The Data Protection Officer is Mr. Stefano Burotti; E-mail: rpd@unicam.it; Certified e-mail: rpd@pec.unicam.it; Tel. 0737/402015.

Art.15 - Confidentiality

The administrative unit, the members of the Evaluation Committee, and the candidates are required to comply with the confidentiality obligations regarding the technical and intellectual property information of a confidential nature contained in the documentation submitted by the candidates and/or exposed during the interview. The administrative unit, the members of the Evaluation Committee, and the candidates are required to keep confidential the data, information, drawings and other property of the candidates at the basis of the project ideas in view of the presentation of an application under the ERC Starting Grant Call, and the obligation to comply with the commitments signed under the terms of this article is extended to the staff whereof.

Art. 16 - Ethical principles and due diligence

In the implementation of this Notice, the principles and obligations set out in art. 6 of Directorial Decree 2243/2021 for initiatives promoted by Ministerial Decree No. 737/202, will be respected, in accordance with EU Regulation No. 241/2021, and with the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026, regarding:



- Compliance with environmental objectives, in particular the principle of “not causing significant harm” pursuant to art. 17 of Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- Sound financial management pursuant to Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 and art. 22 of Regulation (EU) 2021/240;
- Additional support from the European Union, and prevention of double funding pursuant to art. 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/241;
- Gender equality;
- Protection and promotion of young people;
- State support;
- Communication and information, pursuant to art. 34 of Regulation (EU) 2021/241, pursuant to which, recipients of EU funding are required to give notice of the same and ensure its visibility, by applying the EU logo, and publishing a statement regarding the funding, bearing the following wording: “Funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU”.

Art. 16 - Final rules

For the purposes of this administrative procedure and the consequent legal obligations, the Head of the Procedure is the Head of Research, Technology Transfer and Project Management Office Dr. Riccardo Strina (riccardo.strina@unicam.it). For any information: area.ricerca@unicam.it.

The Rector
Prof. Claudio Pettinari

Attachments:

- Annex 1 - Scientific Proposal template (Form A_1);
- Annex 2 - Ethics Statement Ethical Issues checklist (Form A_2)
- Annex 3 - Curriculum Vitae (Form A_3)
- Annex 4 - Track record (Form A_4)
- Annex 5 - Budget Template (Form B_1)