

**METHODOLOGY FOR  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
"START GRANT" PROGRAM  
INTEGRATION GRANTS FOR WUT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH STAFF**

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**Art. 1.** The *START GRANT* Program aims to increase the attractiveness of an academic career at WUT, with a focus on facilitating the integration of new human resources and the development of research skills, in particular by increasing the competitiveness of young researchers in competitions within Horizon Europe and in competitions within the National Plan for Research, Development and Innovation PNCDI - 4th edition. The measures envisaged will create favorable conditions for the integration of their young researchers from outside Romania and other categories of researchers in the WUT.

**Art.2.** The target group of this program is the newly hired teaching and research staff, with a fixed-term or permanent employment contract.

**Art.3.** The *START GRANT* program refers to a program of internal integration grants, of non-competitive individual project type. The grants are addressed to both teaching staff and staff employed in research positions at WUT. Eligible persons are those who cumulatively fulfill the following conditions:

- (a) apply in writing for activation of the integration grant;
- (b) they have held a teaching or research position, which has been put out to competition with the approval of the WUT Senate, as part of the staff of an academic/research department;
- (c) have a total length of service at the WUT of no more than 90 days; persons exempted from this provision are those who: (i) have been employed only in research projects and/or (ii) have been employed only as associate lecturers.

**Art.4.** The duration of an integration grant is 12 months, with the possibility of extension for a further 12 months. The extension may be made on the basis of: (i) a request for an extension of the integration grant for another year; (ii) the fulfillment of the performance indicators for the first year; (iii) the assumption of performance indicators for the eleventh year, including a clause for partial recovery of the amounts awarded in the event of failure to meet the indicators for the eleventh year. The duration of a grant may not exceed the duration of the individual employment contract of the grantee for the basic position held by the grantee in the WUT.

**Art.5.** During the first 12 months, the integration grant requires the following activities/ fulfillment of the following criteria:

- (i) attending and successfully completing a minimum of six training sessions (modules) in good research practices;
- (ii) undertaking a 4-week (28-30 days) mobility abroad to an institution in Europe relevant to the grantee's field of science and research interest;
- (iii) fulfill at least one of the following two performance criteria:
  - (a) writing and successful submission of a manuscript, to a Web of Science (SCIE, SSCI, AHCI, ESCI) or Scopus indexed journal, whose status is at least "*under review*", as a first author (corresponding author for fields where there is no practice of differentiating between first author and co-authors; or
  - (b) drafting as project leader and successful submission (*the project is considered eligible*) of a research project in any of the PNCDI4 or Horizon Europe research funding competitions.
- (iv) The activities specified in points (i), (ii), and (iii) are in addition to those required for the primary position.

**Art. 6.** The training sessions on good research practices will be conducted by experienced researchers from WUT in the addressed topics. The mandatory modules will include: (i) External funding sources - Horizon Europe Program; (ii) Internal funding sources - PNCDI IV; (iii) Project writing (with a focus on

PN 4 and Horizon Europe); (iv) Transversal research skills (open science, reproducibility, dissemination, scient metrics, etc.); (v) Academic writing / manuscript preparation / exploring academic journals. These will be complemented by a session chosen based on the participants' needs and the expertise of the available instructors, with possible topics including Introduction to R or Stata, Familiarization with WUT's administrative services, etc.

**Art. 7.** Each training module will contain a minimum of 16 hours of face-to-face teaching activity and a minimum of 30 hours of individual study/deepening, as well as at least one practical task to be completed individually with feedback from the instructor. Each thematic module can be taught by 1-3 instructors, and the face-to-face teaching sessions will be recorded and available for consultation in digital format. Each module will be conducted semi-annually to cover both first semester and second semester entries into the system. Instructors' activities will be remunerated from WUT's research fund or other funds attracted by WUT for these activities. Eligible expenses will include those related to the development of teaching materials, training and evaluation of participants, and digital valorisation and dissemination of produced materials.

**Art. 8.** The integration grant can be extended for another 12 months for beneficiaries who:

- (i) request the extension of support for another 12 months;
- (ii) have successfully completed the first year of the grant, meeting the minimum performance standard for the first year as mentioned in Art. 4;
- (iii) commit to the following performance indicators for the second year of the grant:
  - a. publishing or having accepted for publication at least one article as the principal author (first author, corresponding author) in a journal indexed in Web of Science or Scopus (other than the article that is the result of the first year of the grant);
  - b. writing and successfully submitting (*the project is considered eligible*) a research project in any of the funding competitions within PNCDI 4 or Horizon Europe (other than the project that is the result of the first year of the grant); exceptionally, point b is not an obligation if the application from the first year was funded (in progress); also, exceptionally, point b can be compensated by another manuscript (additional output) other than that from point a, if no grant competitions could be identified for which they are eligible to apply as a project director;
  - c. participating in at least one international networking event such as conferences, COST actions, etc. (outgoing) or inviting a well-recognized international expert to WUT (incoming) for 3-5 days to stimulate and facilitate scientific networking;
- (iv) participants in the second year of the grant will benefit from a minimum of 4 coaching sessions and/or the guidance of a mentor, chosen from WUT researchers with international visibility and experience in research.

**Art. 9.** The value of an integration grant is 55,000 lei per beneficiary for the first year of implementation (equivalent to 11,000 euros).

**Art. 10.** The budget available in the first year includes:

- Salary expenses amounting to 39,600 lei gross per year, covering 360 hours of project activity (30 hours per month) at a gross hourly rate (including employer expenses) of 110 lei per hour.
- Expenses related to mobility abroad amounting to 11,000 lei;
  
- A minimum of necessary logistical expenses (such as a laptop, other inventory items, subscriptions) amounting to 4,400 lei. Variations of  $\pm 15\%$  between mobility expenses and logistical expenses are permitted, provided that the total remaining amount, represented by the difference between the grant value and the salary expenses, is respected.

**Art. 11.** The value of the integration grant in the second year of implementation is 45,000 lei per beneficiary. Exceptionally, for the field of Computer Science, the grant value in the second year remains 55,000 lei.

**Art. 12.** The budget available in the second year includes:

- Salary expenses amounting to 39,600 lei per year, covering 360 hours of project activity (30 hours per month) at a gross hourly rate (including employer expenses) of 110 lei per hour; exceptionally, for the field of Computer Science, the salary expenses for the second year of grant implementation amount to 48,840 lei per year, covering 444 hours of project activity (37 hours per month) at a gross hourly rate (including employer expenses) of 110 lei per hour.
- Expenses for the mobility of the grant beneficiary or for bringing an international expert to WUT for networking purposes, and, if necessary, necessary logistical expenses, representing the remaining difference between the annual grant value and the salary expenses stipulated in the grant.

**Art. 13.** If the amount allocated for funding is not fully used in the grant implementation year, the unspent differences remain at the disposal of the University.

**Art. 14.** The University ensures administrative support for the smooth implementation of the grant through the following components:

- (i) DCSCU for monitoring the implementation status of the activities provided in the grant, including verification of the annual performance indicators (through dialogue with the beneficiaries);
- (ii) The Scientific Council of WUT and the relevant Vice-Rector responsible for research activities for identifying, selecting, and paying the individuals who will provide training to the beneficiaries, in accordance with the specifications in Arts. 6 and 7 of this Methodology;
- (iii) DRU for managing and paying the monthly allowances and preparing the employment contracts based on the accessed project;
- (iv) DEF, OEPAMI, and the administrators assigned to the faculties from which the beneficiaries come for managing other eligible expenses besides the salary allowance.

**Art. 15.** The funding source for the grant program is the scientific research funding fund of the universities. In situations where necessary, the grant program can also be financed from other sources, such as WUT's own revenues or revenues attracted from other external sources.

**Art. 16.** This methodology becomes effective on *21.01.2022*.