

## **Regulation on the university grant competition for scientific research projects of the University of Georgia**

### **Article 1. General Provisions**

**1.1.** The present provision regulates the rules for holding the university grant competition (hereinafter – "Competition") for scientific research projects of the University of Georgia (hereinafter – "University"), participation in the competition, evaluation of the competition projects (hereinafter – "Project"), granting of the grant and monitoring and final execution of the approved projects.

**1.2.** The purpose of the competition is to promote:

a) creation of a competitive research environment in the university, development of research of outstanding quality, internationalization of research and approach to international standards, integration of the research process in the educational process of the university and growth of the scientific potential of young scientists;

b) creation of new knowledge in the university, theoretical and experimental study-analysis of new ideas and concepts, events and facts, theories and models, which in the long term will contribute to the socio-political, economic, public, cultural and information-technological progress in the country;

c) the development of fundamental and applied research by the university and the dissemination of the results of research carried out according to international standards;

d) publishing the results of fundamental and applied research (scientific articles, publications) in local and international scientific bases ("Elsevier" and "Web of Science", etc.) by academic staff and scientists of the university and increasing the university's research potential and success index;

e) by organizing and conducting local and international conferences, symposia, congresses and forums, encouraging university cooperation at the national and international level, sharing experience between researchers of different generations and different research centers, strengthening local scientific potential as a result of information exchange and experience sharing;

**1.3.** The competition is financed in the form of tranches from the budget of the Scientific Research Institute of the University (hereinafter "Institute"). It is possible to use other sources of funding from national and foreign scientific foundations or other donor organizations.

1.4. It is possible to obtain a grant only through a competition, which is held in two sectoral clusters ("grant clusters"):

- a) Exact, natural, engineering and life sciences;
- b) Humanitarian, social, economic and legal sciences.

The total competition amount will be distributed among the clusters in proportion to the good projects presented in each.

#### **Article 2. Definition of Terms**

a) Young scientist – master, doctorate or a person with an equivalent academic degree, whose academic degree has passed no more than 7 years from the date of the announcement of the competition; Also, graduate student, residency, doctoral student;

b) Grant recipient – affiliated academic staff of the University of Georgia (main staff);

c) Support staff – a natural person who helps the main staff to solve technical tasks;

d) sectoral grant commission – a group of internal and external experts evaluating the projects registered for the grant competition;

e) Co-financier – a legal or natural person registered in Georgia or abroad, which finances a part of the costs determined by the project budget;

f) Participating organization – an entrepreneurial (commercial) or non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity of private law registered in Georgia or abroad or a legal entity of public law, the purpose of which is determined by the charter/regulations (or does not conflict with it) is the implementation or promotion of scientific research, as well as a higher educational institution .

g) individual grant project - a competitive application submitted with the participation of only one person, in accordance with the form approved by this regulation, in order to obtain funding;

h) Monitoring - the procedure of content and financial monitoring of the project provided for by the grant project;

i) Project – a competitive application submitted to the Institute in order to obtain funding, in accordance with the form approved by this regulation;

Approved by the protocol of the Rector's Council No. 01/22 of January 17, 2022  
Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N 03/23 of January 23, 2023  
Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N17/24 of June 17, 2024

j) Project budget – the total amount of financing required for project implementation according to spending categories;

k) project co-leader – a citizen of Georgia and/or a foreign country, who is a representative of a participating organization and coordinates the preparation and implementation of the project together with the project leader;

k<sup>1</sup>) project evaluation criteria - the guiding principles defined by this provision for project evaluation with appropriate indication of points;

l) Project leader – a Georgian or foreign citizen with a doctorate or an equivalent academic degree from the main staff of the project, who will implement the project at the University of Georgia, coordinates the drafting of the project and is responsible for both the scientific results of the project and the reporting of the activities provided for by the project;

m) reporting period – the time period of the project implementation, during which the grantee performs the tasks specified by the project, spends the grant funds and submits a report to the Institute after completion;

n) Grant competition – the procedure administered by the Scientific-Research Institute and Research Development Service to obtain funding provided for in this regulation;

o) tranche - funds to be transferred/transferred, determined by the project budget;

p) Financial monitoring - within the framework of the grant agreement, determining the compliance of the funds transferred by the university's finance department with the cost accounting provided for in the same agreement;

q) content monitoring - determining the compliance of the research process and scientific results achieved by the grant recipient with the research process and planned results provided for in the same grant agreement.

r) Interim/final report – the interim report includes the content and financial report submitted to the institute by the grantee at the end of each reporting period. The final report includes the final content and financial report submitted to the institute by the grantee after the completion of the project;

Approved by the protocol of the Rector's Council No. 01/22 of January 17, 2022  
Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N 03/23 of January 23, 2023  
Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N17/24 of June 17, 2024

s) Key personnel – affiliated academic personnel of the university, doctoral, master's or residency students, doctor, master or natural person/persons with an academic degree equivalent to them, who perform the main tasks planned by the project;

### **Article 3. Competition Administration**

**3.1.** The competition is announced and administered by the Institute and the University's Education and Research Development Service (hereinafter - the "Service"), according to the procedures provided for in this regulation.

#### **3.2.** Institute and service:

a) determines the deadlines for accepting projects, terms of grant competition, project forms, forms of documentation attached to the project and intermediate and final reports of project execution and submits them to the scientific council of the university for approval;

b) announces the competition;

c) carries out the technical examination of the projects registered in the competition, which means determining the compliance of the submitted project documentation with the conditions of the competition;

d) determines and implements necessary procedures for project evaluation;

e) creates sectoral grant commissions and submits them to the scientific council of the university for approval;

f) ensures consideration of the projects by the sectoral grant commission in accordance with the evaluation criteria, as well as, if necessary, making changes to the project, establishing a ranked list based on the received evaluations, identifying the winning projects and submitting them to the scientific council of the university for approval;

g) provides financing of the winning project;

h) monitors the intermediate and final performance of the approved project;

i) consults the competitors. Among them, in order to eliminate the shortcomings found in the project at the stage of project submission, which does not mean providing consultation regarding the relevance, methodology and expected results of the research provided by the project.

**3.3.** The competition consists of the following stages:

- a) announcement of competition;
- b) submission of projects;
- c) evaluation of projects;
- d) identification and approval of winning projects;
- e) conclusion of agreements with the participants of the winning projects.

#### **Article 4. Announcement of the competition**

4.1. The competition is announced once a year, in the first quarter of each calendar year.

#### **Article 5. Participation in the competition**

5.1. The following are eligible to participate in the competition: affiliated academic staff of the university (main staff); To the participating organization (in the case of a joint project). In the case of a joint project, the project may have a co-leader. The participating organization, together with the university, provides the project leader, co-leader, other key project staff and support staff with the material and technical base provided for by the project, and fulfills other obligations provided for by the grant project; A participating organization can also be a legal entity registered abroad, which participates in the performance of certain tasks of the project;

5.2. The duration of the project should not exceed 12 months. In case of non-implementation of the funded project within the approved time frame, which is caused by objective conditions, the head of the project will inform the board of the relevant school/institute, which will look into the above matter. The latter, during the first and last reporting period of the project or within 10 calendar days after its completion, applies a petition (in the form of a protocol) to the scientific-research institute about the extension or termination of the project term. The scientific-research institute informs the rector and vice-rector in the academic and scientific field of its decision. The Scientific-Research Institute is authorized to make a

decision to terminate the project or extend its duration for no more than 6 months, without additional funding.

**5.3.** The funding requested from the university for the project submitted within the framework of the competition should not exceed 20,000 (twenty thousand) GEL per year. In addition, the salary of the main personnel provided by the project should not exceed 50% of the total budget of the project..

**5.4.** Only one person is allowed to participate in a grant project in an individual grant project..

**5.5.** Participation of the same person in several grant projects is allowed, while a person can be the head of only one scientific project.

**5.6.** The project must have a core staff consisting of a project leader, a co-leader (in case of a joint project) and other persons who are responsible for the implementation of the main tasks and related activities of the project. It is possible to use support personnel for the implementation of the project.

**5.7.** At least one young scientist must be involved in the main staff (except for individual grant projects) during the entire period of project implementation.

**5.8.** The approved project must be implemented on behalf of the university and using its material and technical base or that of a participating organization.

**5.9.** The content of the project must be derived from the 3 (three) year research topic approved by the relevant department or research institute of the key personnel and/or the head of the project and be accompanied by the recommendation of the relevant school/institute council (in the form of a protocol) about the scientific significance of the project and its relevance to the research topic.

## **Article 6. Project Submission and Budget**

**6.1.** In order to participate in the competition, the project will be submitted to the Institute. The submission of the project to the institute is carried out in compliance with the established terms and form. Projects submitted in violation of the established deadlines will not be accepted for review.

**6.2.** The institute has the right to remove the project from the competition at any stage of the competition:

- a) which does not meet the requirements of this provision;
- b) which does not correspond to the form of the approved project;

Approved by the protocol of the Rector's Council No. 01/22 of January 17, 2022

Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N 03/23 of January 23, 2023

Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N17/24 of June 17, 2024

c) to which no mandatory attachments are attached.

d) which contains false information.

**6.3.** The project budget within the funding requested from the university may include the following items/expenditure categories:

a) grant funding of key personnel;

b) remuneration of support staff;

c) business trip;

d) goods and services;

e) non-financial assets;

f) overhead costs.

**6.4.** In case of holding an international scientific event, a part of the project budget will be transferred to the grantee in the form of an advance (the amount requested from the project budget minus the grant funding of the main staff and 1/4 of the salary of the support staff). The final settlement will be made based on the submission of financial and content reports to the institute and the drawing up of the appropriate review act by the institute.

**6.5.** Real estate purchase, rent of real estate, overhaul/reconstruction of buildings, purchase of cars, etc. are not allowed with grant funds.

**6.6.** Grant funding for the project is provided in the form of transitions..

## **Article 7. Project Evaluation**

**7.1.** The evaluation of the competition is carried out in two stages. The project is rated on 100 (hundred) point scale.

**7.2.** The first stage of project evaluation involves the evaluation of the grant project by two independent external experts. An encrypted project is sent to an external expert, without reference to the project leader and participants. The external expert is obliged to evaluate in detail the scientific value of the project (relevance and novelty of the research topic, research objective, expected results of the research project,

Approved by the protocol of the Rector's Council No. 01/22 of January 17, 2022

Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N 03/23 of January 23, 2023

Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N17/24 of June 17, 2024

their practical value, estimated plan-schedule of project implementation, significance of expected results).

The total maximum assessment of external experts is no more than 40 (forty) points.

### 7.3. Criteria for evaluating projects at the first stage:

Criteria and subcriteria	Weak	Medium	Good	
<b>Project Scientific Cost (maximum 40 points)</b>				
Relevance and novelty of the research topic	0-4	5-7	8-10	
Research Objective	0-4	5-7	8-10	
Expected results of the research project, their practical value, estimated plan for project sale	0-4	5-7	8-10	
The importance of expected results	0-4	5-7	8-10	

7.3<sup>1</sup>. After the completion of the first stage of the project evaluation, in the case of a large imbalance and difference (10 points error) in the evaluation of external experts (mean points), the project is sent in coded form to the third expert. The total score is calculated by weighting the total score of all three experts.

7.4. The second stage of the project evaluation involves the evaluation of the grant project by sectoral grant commissions (internal experts), the composition of which is approved by the scientific council of the university with a qualified (2/3) majority of votes.

7.5. Commissions are composed of field experts according to grant clusters. The commissions evaluate the human potential of the project (maximum 20 points), the project budget (maximum 20 points) and the compliance of the project with the strategic goals of the university's research (20 points). The total maximum assessment of internal experts is no more than 60 (sixty) points.

<b>The Human Potential of the Project (maximum 20 points)</b>				
Correspondence of the qualifications and scientific potential of the researchers/performers with the project goals	0-4	5-7	8-10	



Approved by the protocol of the Rector's Council No. 01/22 of January 17, 2022

Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N 03/23 of January 23, 2023

Amendment by the Rector's Council Minutes N17/24 of June 17, 2024

	(the scientific knowledge, experience and results of the project leader and researchers in relation to the project topic are evaluated)			
	Foreign researchers and partner institutions involved in the research topic (project)	0-2	3-4	5
	PhD students and young scientists involved in the study topic (if any)	0-2	3-4	5
<b>Project budget (maximum 20 points)</b>				
	Compliance of the project plan and budget with the project objectives	0-6	7-14	15-20
<b>Compliance of the project with the strategic goals of university research (maximum 20 points)</b>				
	Compliance of the project with the strategic goals of the university, sustainability of the project	0-4	5-7	8-10
	Resource compliance with project goals, methodology and expected results	0-2	3-4	5
	Compliance of the budget with project goals, methodology and expected results	0-2	3-4	5

**7.6.** Summarizing the points received by external and internal experts, deriving the weighted average score and ranking the projects is done by the Scientific Research Institute and submitted to the Scientific Council of the University for approval.

**7.7.** In the case of equal points, priority will be given to projects that will increase the university's scientific potential and success index in the short term.

## **Article 8. Conflict of Interest**

**8.1.** An external or internal expert is not allowed to be a person who may receive direct financial or other personal benefits in case of financing or non-financing of the project, as well as a person:

- a) who is a participant of the same competition;
- b) who is an interested party - a participant in the project or a relative of the participant.

**8.2.** For the purposes of this provision, the following shall be considered relatives:

- a) direct line relative;
- b) Spouse, spouse's siblings and direct line relatives;
- c) siblings of a direct relative of the ascending line;
- d) siblings, their spouses and children.

**8.3.** The external and/or internal expert is obliged to officially inform the relevant commission and/or institution about the circumstances and self-exclusion mentioned in this article.

**8.4.** An external and/or internal expert is entitled to declare self-exclusion if he believes that he cannot be objective because the evaluated project competes with his scientific work or he may see personal scientific benefit from the evaluation of this project.

**8.5.** The institute and the service are authorized to discuss the cancellation of the assessment made by the commission member and/or expert (if any) in the event that information about the conflict of interest of the commission member and/or independent expert (if any) becomes known to the institute and service.

**8.6.** At the stage of implementation of the approved project, if the conflict of interest of the commission member and/or independent expert (if any) is confirmed, the approved project will be canceled and the received tranche will be returned to the institute.

**8.7.** The winning projects are identified and approved based on the examination and analysis of the results of the ranking submitted by the scientific council of the university. The relevant decision is sent to the rector of the university.

**8.8.** The rector of the university, with the consent of the presidents of the university, issues an order on the financing of winning projects.

**8.9.** On the basis of the order of the Rector, an appropriate agreement shall be concluded with the heads of the winning projects.

### **Article 9. Project Monitoring**

**9.1.** The University will pay the tranches provided by the project as an advance based on the submission of relevant reports by the grantee. The Scientific Research Institute, Service (Substantive Monitoring) and Finance Department (Financial Monitoring) carry out substantive and financial monitoring of the project.

**9.2.** The content monitoring of the project means checking the documentation confirming the performance of the tasks planned under the grant agreement.

**9.3.** Financial monitoring means determining the compliance of the cost of consent transferred by the University under the grant agreement with the cost estimate provided for by the same contract.

### **Article 10. Project Termination and Completion**

**10.1.** The University, in accordance with the legislation of Georgia, will terminate the funding of the grantee (therefore, the project will be terminated) if the grantee has not fulfilled the obligations stipulated by the project and/or submitted false information in the report.

**10.2.** If the grant is suspended or terminated, the relations between the grant recipient and the university will be regulated in accordance with the legislation of Georgia.

**10.3.** The project will be considered completed if:

a) within the framework of the project, relevant financial and content reports and comparison acts have been submitted to the institute for all tranches transferred as an advance.

b) the institute and the service have drawn up the act of reviewing the implementation of the grant project;