

**GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH GRANT
APPLICATIONS**

2020

OP Group Research Foundation

ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE OF THE FOUNDATION

The OP Group Research Foundation has supported scientific research for a number of decades now. OP Financial Group's appreciation of making an important contribution to society and research work dates back to 1902 when the financial services group was created. OKO was founded by the then recognised decision-makers in society and scientists.

The establishment of the OP Group Research Foundation has to do with the 70th anniversary of Osuuspankkien Keskuspankki Oy. In 1972, OKO's Supervisory Board contributed to the Research Foundation initial capital enabling the Foundation to start its operations.

At the outset, the OP Group Research Foundation was mostly dependent on annual contributions made by OKO and its subsidiaries. Since the 1980s, the foundation's return on assets has formed the core of its operations.

In recent years, the OP Group Research Foundation has annually awarded grants worth over one million euros for scientific research. The foundation also engages in other activities, such as presenting the Doctoral Dissertation Award in every academic year.

GRANTS' PURPOSE AND APPLICATION PERIOD

Grants awarded by the OP Group Research Foundation are intended for economic research and postgraduate studies. Research into cooperative banking and the financial sector on a more extensive basis is given priority.

Applicants may apply for a grant

- a) for personal research
- b) to provide finance for a research team
- c) to provide finance for a professor's research leave
- d) for full-time post-doctoral research and
- e) full-time postgraduate studies.

The grantee must have at least a master's degree. The grant awarded to a research team is aimed at covering salaries of assistants and other research costs. If a member of the research team with a grant wishes to apply for a personal grant, they must specifically apply for it personally.

A grant intended for financing a professor's research leave amounts to a maximum of 32,000 euros. It is granted together with the university for financing a 12-month research period. During the professor's research period, the university as their employer pays 55% of their

gross salary. A professor working permanently for a Finnish university is eligible to apply for the grant, whose university exempts them from administrative and teaching duties for one year (12 months). The applicant must append to the application their university's commitment to such an arrangement.

The annual grant worth a maximum of 65,000 euros for post-doctoral research is intended for those who have recently defended their doctoral dissertation. The foundation pays such a grant to a Finnish university's department that hires the grantee on a contractual basis to which the grantee must get the department's permission already in the grant application stage.

The maximum annual grant for full-time post-graduate studies amounts to 25,000 euros. The foundation awards grants for one year at a time, although successful research teams, post-doctoral researchers and postgraduate students may be entitled to multi-year grants.

It is also possible for a doctoral student to combine a grant awarded for full-time postgraduate studies with salaried employment, so that together they enable full-time postgraduate studies. A doctoral student with a 56% employment contract with a university may apply for a one-year grant (25,000 euros) to be used over a period of two years, or a six-month grant (12,500 euros) to be used over a period of one year. The applicant must submit a statement from the employer on the implementation of

the arrangement to the foundation.

Research may cover economic, social or legal issues, with preference being given to research related to the financial sector or cooperative business.

The Board of Directors of the foundation decides on the total amount of grants awarded annually. At the same time, it determines subjects for which the foundation particularly wishes to receive applications. The OP Group Research Foundation awards grants for large, multi-year projects too. It seeks to increase financing for project-based research.

The foundation will annually inform of the abovementioned changes in priorities when the application period begins. An advertisement soliciting grant applications annually appears, for example, in the Sunday edition of Helsingin Sanomat in early January. The foundation also provides universities with information on applying for grants. Information on applying for grants can also be found on the website of the foundation at <http://www.tutkimusapurahat.fi/>, or potential applicants may contact the foundation for further information.

PURPOSE OF USE OF A GRANT

An applicant must have at least a master's degree in order to be eligible for a research grant. The research project does not need to pertain to the applicant's research related to their licentiate thesis or doctoral dissertation.

The foundation does not award grants for completed researches, their printing or purchases of equipment needed in research work.

The foundation does not award overlapping grants for the same purpose of use. For example, no grant is awarded for full-time postgraduate studies if a similar grant has been awarded by another party. Changes in the purpose of use of the grant are possible only based on permission separately given by the foundation.

The foundation does not award travelling grants for the participation in, say, seminars and workshops. Taking a degree abroad is outside the scope of the grant unless preparing a research report on a relevant subject relates to the use of the grant.

If the applicant receives a grant above the tax-exempt limit, they are required to do research on a full time basis during the time they use the grant. The grantee, who

receives a grant for full-time postgraduate studies, may not be in secondary employment either.

RELATED PARTY REGULATIONS

The new Foundations Act, which entered into force in December 2015, defines in detail the related parties of a foundation and obligates foundations to report any transactions with related parties in their board of directors' report.

The foundation's Board of Directors has approved the foundation's internal related party guidelines to control the related party transactions carried out in the foundation. According to these guidelines, the foundation does not award any grants to the members of its Board of Directors, the foundation's staff, members of its bodies, experts or other people in positions of trust or the family members of any of the abovementioned persons. To other persons within the foundation's related parties, grants can be awarded under the same conditions as applied to all other grant applicants.

Given that under the Foundations Act grants received by related parties must be reported in the report by the foundation's Board of Directors, it is important to know whether the applicant is a related party to the foundation.

The foundation's related parties include mainly the members of the foundation's Board of Directors and the foundation's executive officer as well as members of the Supervisory Board, Boards of Directors, managing directors and auditors of the foundation's founder, OP Cooperative, and of its subsidiaries, and the family members of all the aforementioned persons.

Persons included in the managers and executives of the foundation or OP Cooperative are listed in more detail in the foundation's electronic application system. If the applicant is a related party, they should report this in the application system when submitting a grant application.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

Applicants should send their applications to the foundation during the application period that begins in January and ends on 10 February. This is an absolute deadline and applicants may not supplement their applications after that date.

Applications must be delivered to the foundation as specified in the instructions mentioned in the advertisement of applications and the application form. Applicants must use the foundation's application form. Applicants should summarise their research plan in the application form so that it captures only the essence. They can enclose their research plan separately, which may have a maximum of four pages. The enclosed CV may have a maximum of three pages.

Applicants must send their applications to the foundation via the electronic application system at <http://www.tutkimusapurahat.fi/>.

APPLICATION PROCESSING AND DECISION- MAKING

The OP Group Research Foundation has a scientific committee appointed annually by the Board of Directors of the foundation. The experts of the scientific committee analyse the research projects in terms of the subject's relevance, research plan, the applicant's qualifications as a researcher and the amount of the grant applied for. The scientific committee presents the Board of Directors with the projects it supports.

In its decisions on grants, the Board of Directors takes account of any grant that the applicant may have received earlier from the foundation but such a grant was cancelled afterwards. Basically, an excessive delay in the research project and the ensuing cancellation of the grant have a negative effect on decisions on the applicant's new grants.

The Board of Directors assesses the proposals of the scientific committee and decides on grants in late March. The foundation notifies grantees of the approved grants through the grant system. The grant award ceremony takes place in around mid-April.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE OF A GRANT

If the grantee works continuously for at least four months and their annual pay amounts to at least 3,900.00 euros at the 2019 level, they must report their grant to Mela (Farmers' Social Insurance Institution) (see www.mela.fi). The grantee must also include the grant in their tax return.

The grantee must provide the foundation with a schedule of the research progress, a plan for using the grant with respect of the instalments and their bank account details. As a rule of thumb, the grant is paid depending on how the research project progresses.

The final instalment of personal grants is paid after the research report has been completed or the project has come to an end. It accounts for a third of the total grant. When it comes to major research projects, payment of the final instalment is subject to a separate agreement. The foundation pays the final instalment when the project is considered to be completed.

The use of all grants requires reporting to the foundation. When it comes to large grants and research projects, the applicant is required to do research work on a full-time basis. It is possible to postpone the use of the awarded grant for a maximum of one year.

PROGRESS OF RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION

The foundation annually sends the grantees a query of the progress of their research project. The first time the foundation posts such a query is in October–November following the year when the grant was awarded. For communication with the foundation, grantees must inform of any changes of their address information. The foundation also hopes communication from researchers. It is desirable during the research project that the grantee sends key intermediate reports to the foundation through the electronic grant system.

A grant, which the grantee has not begun to draw down or whose drawdown has not been agreed on within one year of the date on which the grant was awarded, is considered to have been cancelled altogether, without any separate notice. The foundation will cancel the grant or its portion, if the research project is not completed within five years of the date on which the grant was awarded.

The OP Group Research Foundation requires researchers to mention the awarded research grant in their scientific publications.

For more information on applying for and using grants,
please contact:

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