**SUPPORTING TALENT IN RESEARCH
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STARS@UNIPD – STARS Grants 2025

Guide for Applicants

&

Application Templates

Deadline: 21 March 2025 at 1 p.m.
(Padua local time – Italy time zone)

Date of call opening: 20th December 2024

Purpose of this document

This document provides practical information to potential applicants as to assist them in preparing and submitting an application for a STARS Starting, Consolidator or Wild Card Grant. It is not intended to replace consultation of the STARS@UNIPD 2025 Call for proposals.

Guide for Applicants & Application Templates

University of Padua, Italy
STARS@UNIPD Funding Programme 2025
Annex no. 2 to the Call for proposals – GfA

Contents

Objectives and principles of STARS Grants 2025

STARS Grants are envisaged to fund research projects for the duration of 30 months. They must be proposed by researchers holding excellent scientific qualifications and willing to launch or consolidate an independent research and a research team at the University of Padua (Unipd).

This selection announcement foresees three types of grant:

STARS Starting and **Consolidator Grants** are designed to support excellent Principal Investigators (PIs) at a career stage in which they are starting or consolidating their own independent research team or programme;

STARS Wild Card Grants will fund excellent PIs who submitted an ERC Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant in the 2023 and 2024 calls indicating Unipd as their Host Institution and obtained "A" as final panel score in Step 2.

PIs must demonstrate the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal.

STARS grants operate on a "bottom-up" basis with no predetermined priorities. Applications can be made in any field of research with particular emphasis on the frontiers of science, scholarship and engineering. **Scientific excellence** is the sole criterion on the basis of which STARS frontier research grants are awarded.

A PI may submit **only one proposal under the STARS grant call** in one of 28 scientific research areas, grouped in three Macro-areas (Physical Sciences & Engineering, Life Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities) corresponding to the three ERC research domains as described in Annex 1 of the call.

A single submission deadline is foreseen for **STARS-2025-StG, STARS-2025-CoG, STARS-2025-WiC Grants: 21st March, 2025, 1 p.m. (Padua local time - Italy time zone)**

For each type of grant, PIs of any age and nationality, who wish to pursue research at a Department of the University of Padua and meet the following criteria, may apply:

- **STARS-StG**: the PI has successfully defended their first Doctoral degree within a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 5 years prior to 1st January 2025; eligibility extensions are foreseen (see section "Specific eligibility criteria").

- **STARS-CoG**: the PI is a tenured professor or a fixed-term researcher type b) (RTD/B) or researcher in tenure track (RTT) at Unipd, who has successfully defended their first Doctoral degree within a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 years prior to 1st January 2025; eligibility extensions are foreseen (see section "Specific eligibility criteria").

- **STARS-WiC**: the PI is a tenured professor or a fixed-term researcher type b) (RTD/B) or researcher in tenure track (RTT) at Unipd who submitted a proposal in one of the 2023 and 2024 ERC *Starting*, *Consolidator* or *Advanced Grant* calls, indicating Unipd as Host Institution and obtained a final "A" score, but was not funded due to budget limits.

PIs with an ERC grant still active at the deadline of the call, or who will be funded within the date of the approval of the ranking list, are not eligible to apply. PIs who have been previously funded in the framework of the STARS@UNIPD programme past editions are not eligible to apply.

The STARS-StG funding scheme is open to PIs who, at the time of proposal submission may or may not hold a permanent position at Unipd. In case the PI selected for funding does not hold a permanent position at Unipd, the University will provide a contract as a type B research

grant[1] (assegno di ricerca di tipo B) holder or will reserve the right, at its sole discretion, to replace the type B research grant (assegno di ricerca di tipo B) with another contract type, economically equivalent, which should be made available by amendments introduced to Law No. 240/2010. The requirements for the participation of the PIs eligible for funding will be verified at the time of the project start, in accordance with the legislation that will be eventually applicable.

Under penalty of exclusion from the ranking list and subsequent impossibility of proceeding with the award of the grant, the STARS-StG PI admitted to funding must comply with one of the following criteria:

- must hold a position at the University which is compatible with the implementation of the project;

- must meet the legal requirements for the award of a type B research grant (assegno di ricerca di tipo B) or another economically equivalent contract, that may be applicable at the start of the project and throughout its whole duration;

- if holding a fixed-term researcher contract Type a) (Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a - RTD/A) at the University[2], provided it is compatible with the implementation of the STARS project[3] and that it expires before the end of the project, they must ensure, as of the start date as PI, the availability of a sufficient number of months (not less than 12) to activate a type B research grant (assegno di ricerca di tipo B) or another economically equivalent contract that may be applicable to cover the remaining period between the end of the existing fixed-term researcher contract and the conclusion of the STARS project;

- if holding a fixed-term researcher contract Type a) (Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a - RTD/A) at the University[2], that is incompatible with the implementation of the STARS project[3] and expires by 31st December, 2026, they must meet, as of the start date as PI, the legal requirements necessary to activate a type B research grant (assegno di ricerca di tipo B) or another economically equivalent contract, that may be applicable and covers the entire duration of the project; in this case, a postponement of the start of the STARS project will be granted.

Budget of STARS Grants

Each STARS Grant includes a budget covering research costs (RC), which depends on the scientific domain of the proposal. STARS-StG may foresee an amount covering the PI contract[4] (CPI) at Unipd, provided (s)he does not hold a permanent position at Unipd or is a fixed-term researcher contract Type a) (Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a - RTD/A) at Unipd, whose contract, compatible with the execution of the STARS project, does not cover the entire duration of the project. Moreover, STARS-StG may provide an amount for a Mobility allowance (MA), designed to cover the mobility costs for researchers who can certify that they have resided or carried out their main professional

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[1] Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, letter b) of Unipd regulation on research grant contracts.

[2] Under the provisions of law No. 240/2010, Art. 24 par. 3

[3] Positions as RTD/A researchers that require exclusive and full-time commitment, such as those funded by PNR and PNRR calls, are incompatible.

[4] In the following sections of the guide, the terms "contract for the PI," "PI contract," or "CPI" refer to the research grant contract (assegno di ricerca) or any other economically equivalent contract potentially made available by amendments introduced to Law No. 240/2010 and applicable at the time the PI starts their project. See also Art. 7 - Allocation of funding in the call.

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activity in Italy for no more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately prior to the call deadline.

Each **STARS-StG project budget** may include:

1) the cost of a PI contract (CPI), up to 105,000.00 € gross amount/year for 30 months, equivalent to up to 42,000.00 euros gross amount/year, that is indicatively 30,000.00 euros amount/year, gross of the mandatory charges born by the recipient (i.e., in case of a research grant contract - assegno di ricerca, mandatory charges refer to the compulsory *contribution for Italian social security* or INPS). Any "Mobility Allowance" costs shall be covered as described in point 3;

2) a maximum funding of 175,000.00 euros for the Macro-areas LS and PE and 100,000.00 euros for the Macro-area SH, to cover research costs (RC);

3) a contribution for the **Mobility allowance** for 30 months, amounting to (only gross amounts are specified) 500 euros per month and maximum 15,000.00 euros for 30 months (Table 1).

Applicants for STARS-StG holding a fixed-term contract type a) at the University of Padua (Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a) – RTD/A), compatible with the implementation of their STARS project, and set to end before the conclusion of the STARS project, may include in their budget both the research costs (RC) and the costs of a research grant contract for the PI (CPI). The CPI (of at least 12 months duration) must cover the period between the expiration date of the PI fixed-term contract at Unipd and the end of the STARS project, upon condition that the PI meets the legal requirements necessary for the formalization of such contract.

Beneficiaries of STARS-StG already holding a research grant contract on funds for previous projects must resign from such position before the start of the STARS project, in order to activate a new contract (CPI) as PI. Alternatively, they may consider requesting to postpone the beginning of their STARS project; such request must be adequately justified.

STARS-StG (amounts are expressed in K€)	RESEARCH COSTS (RC)			PI CONTRACT (CPI)	MOBILITY ALLOWANCE (MA)
	PE Macro-area: Physical Sciences and Engineering	**LS Macro-area:** Life Sciences	**SH Macro-area:** Social Sciences and Humanities	**PI contract (gross amount for 30 months)**	**Maximum funding covering the mobility costs (gross amount for 30 months)**
Without CPI for the PI	175	175	100	N.A.	N.A.
With CPI for the PI	125	125	75	105	15

Table 1 – Eligible STARS-StG costs

Each **STARS-CoG project budget** may include a maximum funding covering research costs (RC) of 175,000.00 euros for the LS and PE Macro-areas, and of 100,000.00 euros for the SH Macro-area, for 30 months (Table 2).

STARS-CoG (amounts are expressed in K€)	RESEARCH COSTS (RC)		
	PE Macro-area: Physical Sciences and Engineering	**LS Macro-area:** Life Sciences	**SH Macro-area:** Social Sciences and Humanities
PI (internal at Unipd)	175	175	100

Table 2 – Eligible STARS-CoG costs

Each **STARS-WiC project budget** may include a maximum funding covering research costs (RC) of 175,000.00 euros for the LS and PE Macro-areas and of 100,000.00 euros for the SH Macro-area, for 30 months (Table 3).

STARS-WiC (amounts are expressed in K€)	RESEARCH COSTS (RC)		
	PE Macro-area: Physical Sciences and Engineering	LS Macro-area: Life Sciences	SH Macro-area: Social Sciences and Humanities
PI (internal at Unipd)	175	175	100

Table 3 – Eligible STARS-WiC costs

The contribution for research costs (RC) will cover costs for personnel, equipment, travel, consumables, publications and other costs needed to carry out the project (see budget table on page 36).

Examples:

A candidate applies for a StG, Macro-area PE and does not hold a position at Unipd: (s)he can ask for max 105,000.00€ for his/her salary and max 125,000.00€ for costs related to his/her research.

A candidate applies for a StG, Macro-area LS and does not hold a position at Unipd: (s)he can ask for max 105,000.00€ for his/her salary and max 125,000.00€ for costs related to his/her research. If the candidate has been living abroad and hasn't carried out his/her main activity in Italy for more than two years prior to the call deadline (s)he can include a contribution of 15,000.00€ for the Mobility allowance.

A candidate applies for a StG, Macro-area SH and holds a position at Unipd: (s)he can ask for max 100,000.00€ for costs related to his/her research. No money for his/her salary is foreseen.

A candidate applies for a StG, Macro-area PE, holds a fixed-term researcher contract type a) (Ricercatore a tempo determinate di tipo a) - RTD/A) at Unipd funded by PNR, that requires exclusive and full-time commitment. The contract expires by 20 February 2027. (S)He is not eligible and cannot apply to the STARS@UNIPD 2025 call, given that the fixed-term researcher contract type a) (Ricercatore a tempo determinate di tipo a) - RTD/A) is incompatible with the implementation of the STARS project, and it should have been expired before December, 31, 2026.

A candidate applies for a StG Macro-area SH holding a fixed-term research contract type a) (Ricercatore a tempo determinate di tipo a) - RTD/A) at Unipd, that is compatible with the implementation of the STARS project, but the contract expires a year before the end of the project. (S)He is eligible and she can ask for max 75,000.00€ for costs related to his/her research and max 42,000.00€ for his/her one year-salary. Under penalty of exclusion from the ranking list and consequent impossibility of proceeding with the assignment, the candidate must ensure, as of the start date as PI, the availability of a sufficient number of months (not less than 12) to activate a type B research grant (assegno di ricerca di tipo B) or another economically equivalent contract that may be applicable to cover the remaining period between the end of the existing fixed-term researcher contract and the conclusion of the STARS project. If the candidate's employment relationship with Unipd changes during the last years of the project, the project shall continue but the unused amount of the cost for the candidate's research grant contract will be recovered by Unipd.

A candidate applies for a CoG, Macro-area LS and holds a position at Unipd: (s)he can ask for max 175,000.00 € for costs related to his/her research.

A candidate applies for a CoG Macro-area PE and holds a fixed-term research contract type b) at Unipd: (s)he can ask for max 175,000.00 € for costs related to his/her research.

Proposal allocation to a Scientific Area

The allocation of proposals to the various scientific areas will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant (PI).

It is the PI's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant Scientific Area for the evaluation of the proposed research and indicate one or more keywords representing the research fields involved. Macro-areas correspond to ERC domains and Scientific Areas correspond to ERC Panels.

The initial allocation to a Scientific Area is based on the preference of the PI; when necessary, due to the expertise required for the evaluation, a proposal may be reallocated to a different Macro-area or Scientific Area with the agreement of both Chairs concerned.

Specific eligibility criteria

The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be the certified date of the successful defence (and not the award) of the PhD degree (see Art. 2 of the STARS call) according to the national regulations of the country in which the degree was awarded. In case the PhD certificate does not show the date of defence of the PhD, the applicant should provide an official confirmation from the awarding institution of the date of the successful defence of their PhD. In case no defence was organized, the Principal Investigator should provide an official confirmation from the awarding institution that no defence/viva was required (not part of the PhD programme) and stating a date when the PhD was approved (similar to a defence date; i.e. an approval date before the PhD was awarded).

However, the actual time lapse between the date of the PhD and the deadline specified in the call (1st January 2025) can be reduced in the following properly documented circumstances, provided that they started before the call deadline.

For **maternity**, the effective elapsed time since the successful defence of the first PhD degree will be considered reduced by a flat rate of 18 months or, if longer, by the documented amount of leave actually taken for each child born **before or after** the PhD defence. The same rule also applies for child adoption. *Supporting documents*: birth certificate(s) or passport(s) of the child(ren); for extension requests above the flat rate, an official signed document from the employer certifying start and end dates of the individual leave(s).

For **paternity**, the effective elapsed time since the successful defence of the first PhD degree will be considered reduced by the documented amount of paternity leave actually taken for each child born **before or after** the PhD defence. The paternity leave must be documented through a certificate released by the competent institution/authority (e.g. an official signed document from the employer or the competent institution/authority certifying start and end date(s) of the individual leave(s)). The same rule also applies for child adoption. *Supporting documents*: an official signed document from the employer certifying start and end dates of the individual leave(s).

For **long-term illness** (over 90 days for the PI or a close family member: child, parent, sibling or spouse) the effective elapsed time since the successful defence of the first PhD degree will be considered reduced by the documented amount of leave actually taken by the PI for each incident which occurred **after** the PhD defence. *Supporting documents*: an official, signed document from the employer certifying start and end

dates of the individual leave(s) or a medical record that indicates work incapability with the start and end dates of the illness period(s), and an official document explaining the long-term nature of the illness or condition (of the PI or of the close family member, e.g. from a hospital, a doctor or an insurance company).

For **national (military) service**, the effective elapsed time since the successful defence of the first PhD degree will be considered reduced by the documented amount of leave actually taken by the PI **after** the PhD defence. *Supporting documents*: document signed by official authority with start and end date of the service.

For **disability**, the effective elapsed time since the successful defence of the first PhD degree will be considered reduced by the documented period during which the PI was unable to work or had reduced working capacity **after** the PhD defence. *Supporting documents*: an official document confirming the disability together with documentation certifying leave/part-time working/reduced working capacity resulting from the disability, with relevant start and end dates (if applicable).

For **clinical training**, an extension can be granted corresponding to the documented time of clinical training received by the PI **after** the award of the first eligible degree up to a maximum of 4 years. For applicants whose first eligible degree is a medical degree, clinical training can be accepted from the date of the completion of their medical degree. No extension will be accepted for serving as a house doctor or hospital doctor unless it is part of a clinical training programme. In case of part-time clinical training, the exact total training time will be accepted on a pro-rata basis to extend the eligibility window of the applicant. *Supporting documents*: an official document signed by the institution responsible for the clinical training, certifying start and end date(s) of the individual training period(s).

For **major disaster**, an extension can be granted corresponding to the documented time of a PI's inability to work for a minimum number of 90 days before the call deadline due to major disaster (large-scale geological, meteorological or human-caused events, e.g. armed conflicts), which occurred **after** the date of the successful defence of the PhD degree. *Supporting documents*: an official, signed document from the employer certifying start and end date(s) of the inability or reduced capacity to work due to a major disaster.

For **seeking asylum**, an extension can be granted corresponding to the documented time of the PI's inability to work before the call deadline due to seeking asylum, which occurred **after** the date of the successful defence of the PhD degree. The possible period of extension runs from the start date of asylum/refugee application to the date of decision on the applicant PI's refugee status and/or receipt of specific residence permit. *Supporting documents*: an official, signed document from the competent authorities confirming the PI's inability to work due to seeking asylum indicating a start date of asylum/refugee application and a date of the decision on the applicant PI's refugee status and/or receipt of specific residence permit. This information can be provided within several documents. An official document proving the Acknowledgement of receipt of the request/application for the asylum /refugee status could be also accepted.

PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees

In order to be eligible to apply to the STARS Starting, Consolidator or Wild Card Grants a PI must have successfully defended a PhD or equivalent doctoral degree.

It is acknowledged that, in certain fields, there are doctoral titles that enjoy the same status as and represent variants of the PhD. All of them have **similar content requirements**. Potential applicants are invited to consult the following document for

useful references on degrees that will be considered equivalent to the PhD:

EURYDICE - "Examinations, qualifications and titles - Second edition, Volume 1, European glossary on education" http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/european-glossary-on-education-pbEC3212292/ published in 2004. Please note that some titles that belong to the same category as doctoral degrees (ISCED 6 – 1997 classification or ISCED 8 – 2011 classification[5]) may correspond to the intermediate steps towards the completion of doctoral education and they should not be therefore considered as PhD-equivalent.

A list of research doctorate titles awarded in the United States that have the same status as and present variants of the PhD within certain fields is available on line[6]. These doctorate titles are also recognized as PhD-equivalent by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF).

Applicants holding a degree in medicine

A first degree in medicine (DM) will not be accepted by itself as equivalent to a PhD degree. To be considered an eligible PI, applicants holding a degree in medicine need to provide **the certificates of both the medical degree AND the PhD OR proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency** (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship, professorship appointment). Additionally, candidates must also provide information on their research experience (including peer reviewed publications) in order to further substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD.

If the PI holds a DM and proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency, the time reference for calculation of the eligibility time-window is the certified date of the medical degree completion plus two years (i.e. 2 - 7 years past the medical degree for STARS-StG, and over 7 - 12 years past the medical degree for STARS-CoG).

For medical doctors holding both a DM and a PhD, **the date of the earliest degree that makes the applicant eligible** takes precedence in the calculation of the eligibility time-window (i.e. DM plus two years and proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency or the date of the successful defence of the PhD degree). A medical degree takes precedence over a PhD degree **only** when an applicant has held an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship, professorship appointment) **before** the date of successful defence of a PhD.

Examples on eligibility criteria

Starting Grants

A candidate has successfully defended his/her first PhD on 1/5/2017. (S)He is not eligible because (s)he obtained his/her degree since more than 5 years prior to 1st January 2025.

A candidate has successfully defended her first PhD on 1/3/2017. She is mother of 2 children. She is eligible because the elapsed time since the defence of the PhD will be reduced of 36 months (18 months per child).

A candidate has successfully defended his first PhD on 28/10/2019. He leaves for paternity for 3 months. He is eligible because the elapsed time since the defence of the

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[5] Information on ISCED Mapping is available at the following link: http://www.uis.unesco.org.
[6] http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-structure-us.html.

PhD will be reduced of 3 months.

A candidate was awarded a DM on 1/6/2014 and then has defended a PhD on 1/10/2020. (S)He has worked as Associate Professor since 1/1/2017. His/her professorship appointment required doctoral equivalency. (S)He is not eligible for a STARS-StG because the earliest degree that makes the applicant eligible is the DM and (s)he obtained it since more than 7 years prior to 1st January 2025.

A candidate was awarded a DM on 1/1/2018 and then has defended a PhD on 1/09/2022. (S)He has worked as a Researcher since 1/1/2022. His/her appointment did not require doctoral equivalency. (S)He is eligible for a STARS-StG because the earliest degree that makes the applicant eligible is the PhD and (s)he obtained it since less than 5 years prior to 1st January 2025.

Consolidator Grants

A candidate has been awarded his/her first Doctoral qualification on 1/4/2015 and is a tenured Professor at a French University. (S)He is not eligible because (s)he doesn't hold a position at Unipd.

A candidate has been awarded his/her first Doctoral qualification on 25/11/2019 and is a Researcher on a fixed-term contract of type a) at Unipd. (S)He is not eligible because (s)he doesn't hold a position at Unipd (i.e. Researcher on a fixed-term contract of type b), Researcher Tenure Track or tenured Professor).

A candidate is a Researcher on a fixed-term contract of type b) at Unipd and has been awarded his/her first Doctoral qualification on 1/4/2020. (S)He is not eligible for a Consolidator Grant, but (s)he is eligible for a Starting Grant.

A PI who was awarded a degree in medicine on 1/1/2007, completed three year clinical training in 2011 and held one or several research positions (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship or professorship appointment) prior to being awarded a PhD in 2016, is ineligible for both the STARS-StG and STARS-CoG Grants. The medical degree together with the research experience acquired during the research position(s) is considered equivalent to a PhD. Therefore, the earliest eligible degree is the medical degree – awarded 18 years prior to 1 January 2025 and not within the eligibility window (the date of the medical degree + 2 years = 1 January 2007, is used for the calculation of the eligibility window of 0-5 years for StG and 5-10 years for CoG). An extension for three years of clinical training is not enough to make the applicant eligible for the STARS CoG.

Evaluation Criteria – Procedures for the STARS@UNIPD 2025 Call

Unipd will appoint an Evaluation Committee as to select the winning project proposals. It will be nominated by the Rector of Unipd and composed of maximum 28 external experts of recognized international prestige, in the 3 ERC Macro-areas: PE - Physical Sciences and Engineering; LS - Life Sciences; SH - Social Sciences and Humanities. The Committee will work in three Sub-committees, one for each Macro-area, composed of maximum 11, 9 and 8 experts (PE=11, LS=9, SH=8). If no projects are submitted within an area, no experts will be appointed in that area. Sub-committees will also make use of independent reviewers in the particular scientific areas of individual projects. The Evaluation Committee will be chaired by three coordinators (acting as Chairs of the Sub-committees) who will coordinate the work of the three Sub-committees.
Experts in the Evaluation Committee perform evaluations on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their Country or any other entity. They are

independent, impartial and objective, and behave in a professional manner.
For all STARS@UNIPD grants, scientific excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation. It will be applied in conjunction to the evaluation of both: the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of the research project; the intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment of the PI.

Proposals are submitted in a single stage and evaluated in two steps by the experts against the following criteria (Table 4).

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1. Research Project
Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project
To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?
To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or developments between or across disciplines)?

Scientific Approach
To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the ground-breaking nature and ambition of the proposed research (based on the Extended Synopsis)?
To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the research proposal)?
To what extent does the proposed timescales, resources, and PI's commitment adequate and properly justified (based on the research proposal)?

2. Principal Investigator
Intellectual capacity and creativity

To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative original thinking?
To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

Table 4 – Evaluation criteria

Conflicts of interest: under the terms of the expert's contract, all experts must declare any conflict of interest beforehand and must immediately inform the STARS@UNIPD Internal Commission if they detect any conflict of interest at any time during the course of the evaluation.

Confidentiality: the expert's contract also requires experts to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process. They must follow any instructions given by the STARS@UNIPD Internal Commission to ensure this. Under no circumstances may an expert attempt to contact an applicant on his/her own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

Indicative timetable for the STARS@UNIPD 2025 Call for proposals

Call opening	20 December 2024
Deadline for proposal submission	21 March 2025 hrs 1 p.m.
Eligibility check	23 April 2025
Evaluation Step 1	31 July 2025

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Evaluation Step 2	31 October 2025
Interview	November 2025
Evaluation results	December 2025
Financed projects ranking approval	December 2025
Date of project beginning	1 February 2026
Deadline for projects starting date	31 March 2026

Instructions to submit the proposal

The application package consists of two parts:
- an administrative form containing information about the PI and concise information on the proposal;
- the research proposal must be prepared according to this Guide and needs to be attached to the administrative form in .pdf format. It should consist of
  - **Part B1**: Extended Synopsis; the PI's Curriculum Vitae and Track Record (only for STARS-StG and CoG);
  - **Part B2**: the Scientific Proposal.

To access the electronic submission system, please go to: https://pica.cineca.it/unipd/tipologia/stars.

1. Proposals must be submitted electronically, please do not send anything by e-mail or post.

2. Before starting the application procedure, please read carefully the call text, make sure you meet all the eligibility criteria and verify which documents are required for the application.

3. Please note that all documents required for the application must be uploaded in a .pdf format (max. 30 MB) and, for some of the available signature methods, they must be printed, signed and re-uploaded in the electronic submission system. Please make sure to have a printer and a scanner available and ready for use.

4. It is possible to access the electronic submission system multiple times to fill in the proposal, saving the data entered every time. Once you access the system again, you can continue filling in the proposal by clicking on: "Modifica/Edit".

5. The electronic submission system provides instructions in Italian and English; please note that proposals must be written in English; should any document in the application be written in any language other than English or Italian, an English translation must be included.

6. For further information, please write to: talent.stars@unipd.it. For technical issues concerning the electronic submission system, please refer to the PICA-CINECA staff: contacts are available at the bottom of the electronic submission system home page https://pica.cineca.it/unipd/tipologia/stars. A reply is not guaranteed when using contacts different from the ones mentioned above.

7. Once you have completed and submitted the proposal, you will receive an e-mail with confirmation of the successful submission.

8. Proposals' contents are registered via the electronic submission system and entered into a database to support the evaluation process.

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1.	**HOW TO REGISTER AND ACCESS THE SYSTEM**

The electronic submission system is open from 20 December 2024 to 21 March 2025 at 1 p.m. (Padua local time – Italy time zone). To access the system, please go to https://pica.cineca.it/unipd/ and log in (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 – PICA starting page: login.

If you have Institutional credentials (only for candidates affiliated to Unipd), please click on "Accedi con SPID o Credenziali Istituzionali", and choose "Università di Padova" to enter with IDP UNIPD – Single Sig On (Fig. 2).

If you register for the first time, please click on "New registration" and fill in the requested fields (Fig. 2, 3).

If you are a LOGINMIUR user, you can access the system using the username and password of your LOGINMIUR account. In this case, please select "LOGINMIUR" from the dropdown-list "Credentials".

In case you have a username and a password but you do not remember them, please click on "Forgot your credentials?"
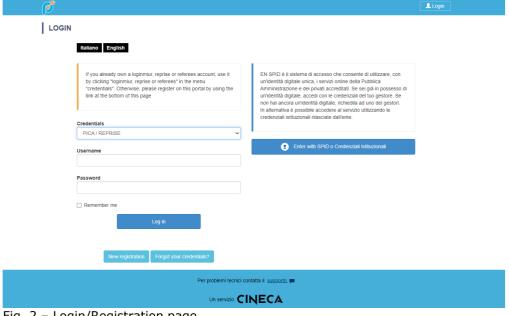

Fig. 2 – Login/Registration page.

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Fig. 3 – User registration.

After having completed all the requested fields, please click on "New registration" (Fig. 4); the system will send an email to the email address you indicated informing you on how to confirm your registration. In case you do not receive such email message, please contact the available support service by clicking at the bottom of the page.

Fig. 4 – New registration.

2.   ACCESS TO THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Once you have registered, you can log in to https://pica.cineca.it/unipd with your credentials, select from the lists of Universities, the University of Padua "Università di Padova" and select "**STARS"** from the menu "Tipologia /Category" and thus enter the submission portal (Figg. 5, 6):
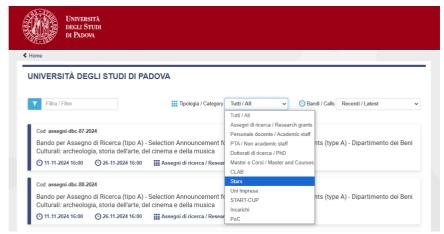

Fig. 5 – Searching the STARS call.

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Fig. 6 – Application form.

Click on "Compila una nuova domanda/New submission" to start a new submission.

3. PROPOSAL SECTIONS

In Fig. 7 you can find the index of the sections of the proposal.

Fig. 7 – Index - Proposal sections.

Please remember to click on "**Salva e prosegui/Save and proceed**" after you have entered the requested data in each section.

If there is no error, the system will let you go to the next section. In case errors are detected, an error message will be displayed: data must be corrected in order to proceed any further.

3.1. Registrazione progetto/Application

Based on the eligibility criteria established in Art. 2 of the call for proposals, you shall select the type of grant for which you intend to apply (you may only choose one):

a) STARS Starting Grant (StG)
b) STARS Consolidator Grant (CoG)
c) STARS Wild Card Grant (WiC)

You shall write title, acronym, abstract, ERC area of the project and at least one keyword among the ERC ones, which can be selected from the dropdown-list.
Please also indicate your hosting Department (choose the Department name, in Italian, from the dropdown-list, see the full list at page 44) and, **only** in case of StG, your Scientific Supervisor at Unipd.
You shall also indicate any applications to previous editions of the programme, specifying the year of the call. Please, note that as stated in the Art. 2 – Individual eligibility Criteria of the call, PIs who have been previously funded in the framework of the STARS@UNIPD programme past editions are not eligible to apply.
You should also indicate your current or latest organization, specifying the name of the institution/organization and the country.

3.2. Trattamento dati personali e Dichiarazione di responsabilità/Information notice on personal data treatment and Declaration of Liability

The candidate is requested to read and accept some statements on personal data handling.

3.3. Dati anagrafici e recapiti/Personal and Contact Data

This section already contains data that were entered during the registration procedure; you shall fill in the empty fields only. In case one or more of your personal data are incorrect, you can modify the information on your User profile, which can be found on the top right of the webpage.

3.4. Titoli di studio/Qualifications

Please fill in the fields with the information regarding your PhD degree. Write your PhD thesis title in the field "**Tesi di Dottorato / PhD Thesis** | Descrizione / Description".
You shall upload a copy of the certificate or a self-certification (note that a self-certification may be accepted only for Italian and EU citizens holding a PhD awarded by an Italian University).
Regarding the possible extension of the eligibility period, please read the section "Specific eligibility criteria" and upload the requested documents.

In case of MD, please see the instructions specified in section "Medical Doctors (applicants holding a degree in medicine)" of this Guide (page 9) and insert your MD qualification details as appropriate. You may have the possibility to upload the certificate for the proof of appointment in the field of extension.

Fig. 8 – Qualifications – Possible extension of eligibility period.

3.5. Proposta progettuale / Project proposal

Concerning the Budget (Fig. 9), please select the various cost categories from the dropdown-list, which must correspond to the categories of the budget table in the Research Proposal PART 2 (see page 34); you can add a cost field (only one for category) by clicking on "Aggiungi/Add". For each cost category you shall indicate the total amount (e.g.: if two postdocs are planned, please indicate the total cost).

If no PI costs are foreseen in your case, please fill in the corresponding field with "0".

The "Total estimated eligible costs" (including the PI costs) will be filled in automatically by the system.

Please note that the Total Estimated Eligible Costs cannot exceed the amount of 230.000,00 € for LS and PE, and 180.000,00 € for SH.

Fig. 9 – Budget section.

You can also require the Mobility allowance, if needed. You shall indicate your place(s) of main activity / place(s) of residence in the past 3 years, inserting the most recent location first. You shall indicate the period(s) and the Country(ies) in which you have legally resided or had your main activity (work, studies, etc.) during the past 3 years and up until the call deadline (i.e. from 22 March 2022 to 21 March 2025). Please, note that short stays shall not be considered. Short stays are characterized by the type of activity rather than by a specific number of days. A period can only be considered as a short stay if the researcher did not reside or did not have their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country during that period (such as holidays or participation to conferences).

Then, you must upload the project proposal. The maximum size for each file that needs to be uploaded is **30 MB**.

Depending on the type of funding for which you are applying (you may only choose one), please provide the following annexes:

a) Starting Grant (StG)
a1. Research proposal (Part B1 - Extended Synopsis, CV and Track Record)
a2. Research proposal (Part B2 - Scientific Proposal)
a3. Letter of Commitment only IF the PI does NOT hold a permanent position at Unipd[7]
a4. Copy of valid ID

b) Consolidator Grant (CoG)
b1. Research proposal (Part B1 - Extended Synopsis, CV and Track Record)
b2. Research proposal (Part B2 - Scientific Proposal)
b3. Copy of valid ID

c) Wild Card Grant (WiC)
c1. Research proposal (Part B2 - Scientific Proposal)
c2. ERCEA Summary Report
c3. Copy of valid ID

3.6. Ethics Issues Table and self-assessment
Please reply to the questions related to ethics issues in the two sections dedicated and if you answer "Yes" to any of the questions, provide additional information on that ethics issue in the Ethics Self-Assessment section.

3.8. Security Issues Table and self-assessment
Please reply to the questions related to security issues in the last section and if you answer "Yes" to one or more of the questions, describe the measures you intend to take to solve/avoid them.

3.6. Dichiarazioni finali / Final Declarations
This section comprises a number of statements that need to be undersigned.
For PIs applying for a Starting grant, there is the declaration of the meeting of the individual eligibility requirements, concerning the current position and, eventually, the possibility to activate a contract to covering the entire duration of the project.
Furthermore, in this section you can inform the competent offices if you need support in case of disabilities.

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[7] A PI not holding a permanent position at Unipd is either external to the University or holding a research grant contract (assegno di ricerca) or a fixed-term contract (Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a) – RTD/A) at the University of Padua, under the provisions of Law No. 240/2010, articles 22 and 24 formerly in force.

4.	**SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL**

At this point, you will view your application in the dashboard, please verify whether it is complete and then submit it by clicking on "Presenta/Submit" (Fig. 10)

Fig. 10 – Dashboard with status and possible actions for the drafted proposal.

If the application procedure has been correctly completed, scroll down and click the button "Firma / Sign" at the end of the page, the system will then generate a .pdf file of the proposal.
In case of error, a warning message will be displayed: errors must be corrected to proceed.

In order to complete the submission, sign the document. Three options for signature will be shown (Fig. 11), please note that for foreign applicants only the first option will be displayed ("Firma il documento manualmente / Handwritten Signature").

Fig. 11 – Signature options.

When the signed PDF of the proposal is uploaded, please click on "Send the application" to successfully send the proposal (Fig. 12).

An email message confirming the submission of the proposal will be sent to your account.
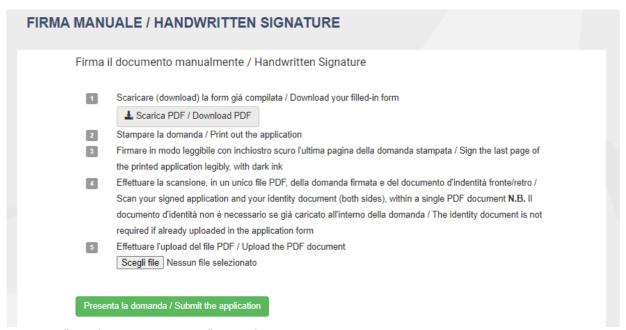

Fig. 12 – "Handwritten Signature" procedure.

5. HOW TO MODIFY OR WITHDRAW YOUR APPLICATION

Once proposals are submitted, they cannot be opened and no further modifications can be made; therefore, if you need to make any changes, you will need to cancel the proposal by clicking on "Ritira domanda / Withdraw" (Figg. 13, 14).
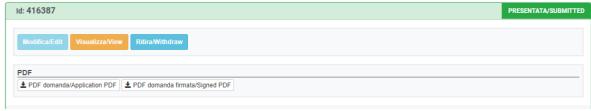

Fig. 13 – Withdrawal of the application.

Fig. 14 – Withdrawal of the application.

After having confirmed the withdrawal, you shall sign the document generated by the system:

Please follow the instructions for signature procedures.

Once you have completed this procedure, you can register and submit a new proposal within the deadline of the call.

6.   INTERVIEW

STARS-StG and STARS-CoG candidates admitted to Step 2 of the selection process will be invited for an interview with the Sub-committee of the relevant Macro-area.
Candidates will be notified of the date and time of the interview by e-mail (at the address indicated in the application form) with a notice of approximately 3-4 weeks.

In case of remote interviews (via Zoom platform), candidates shall make sure to be available at least half an hour before the interview, and to have a well-functioning connection; both audio and video connections are required to make the candidates' identification possible. In case the connection does not allow the Sub-committee to see/hear the candidate during the interview, the candidate will be called again for a maximum of three times during the day of the interview. Unipd will register the elements proving that the interview has (or has not) taken place, including log files proving whether the connection has been established and any other element the Sub-

committee considers useful to prove that the interview has (or has not) been completed. The Sub-committee shall call the candidate for three times. In the event the Sub-committee is not able to complete the interview, this will be evaluated on the basis of what has been discussed and considered successfully terminated. It will not be replaced with or integrated by any other forms of interview.

7.	**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The call for proposals is managed by the International Research Office of the University of Padua:

- for questions or information about the proposal submission and the evaluation procedure, please refer to the International Research Office: talent.stars@unipd.it;
- for technical issues concerning the electronic submission system, please refer to the PICA-CINECA staff: contacts are available at the bottom of the electronic submission system home page https://pica.cineca.it/unipd/.

Instructions for completing "Part B" of the proposal

The research proposal (Part B) consists of two parts:

Part B1 (including <u>cover page, sections a, and b)</u> and
Part B2 (<u>including sections a, b, and c)</u>.

The templates for these two parts are available in this guide (page 29). They can be downloaded at the following links: https://www.unipd.it/en/stars2025 (Unipd website in English) or https://www.unipd.it/stars2025 (Unipd website in Italian) and their use is mandatory.

PIs applying for WiC grants should complete only part B2 of the proposal.

PART B1

When drafting Part B1, PIs should pay particular attention to the extended synopsis (section a) and should not consider it as simply complementing Part B2. Since the experts will only evaluate Part B1 at Step 1, it is important that the extended synopsis contains all essential information <u>including the feasibility of the scientific proposal</u>.

Please, note that at Step 1 the experts have no access to Part B2.

The information to be included in each section as well as the maximum length of each section or its sub-sections is described below.

In fairness to all applicants, the page limits below will be applied strictly. Only the material that is presented within these limits will be evaluated.

Each proposal page **<u>shall</u>** carry a **<u>header</u>** presenting the **<u>PI's last name</u>**, the **<u>acronym of the proposal</u>**, and the reference to the respective proposal section (**<u>Part B1</u>** or **<u>Part B2</u>**).

The following parameters **<u>shall</u>** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman, Arial or similar	At least 11	Single	2 cm side 1.5 bottom

<u>Part B1 – Cover page:</u>

Please abide by the format requirements, as exemplified in the online template provided in the STARS website.

Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
Name of the PI's host Department for the Project

Proposal full title
Proposal Acronym
Proposal duration in months
Proposal summary (half a page)
For inter-disciplinary/cross-panel proposals: please indicate the additional STARS review panel(s) and explain why the proposal needs to be considered by more than one panel.

Part B1 Sections a, b and c:

The Research Proposal

a. Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal (max. 5 pages)

The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to the ground-breaking nature of the research project and the feasibility of the outlined scientific approach. Describe the proposed work in the context of the state of the art of the field. References to literature should also be included at the end of Part B1. References do not count towards the page limits. It is important that this extended synopsis contains all essential information as the experts will only evaluate Part B1 at Step 1.

The Principal Investigator

b. Curriculum Vitae and Track Record (max. 4 pages):

The CV should include the PI's personal details, education, key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions. A suggested outline is available in the Part B1 downloadable template. The structure of the CV may be modified. Any research career gaps and/or unconventional paths should be clearly explained so that they can be fairly assessed by the evaluation panels, allowing them to take a rounded view of the PI's career. The PI must provide a list of achievements reflecting his/her track record. The applicant should list (if applicable):

1. **Research achievements: publications (up to ten) in major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals** and/or in the **leading international peer-reviewed journals, peer-reviewed conferences proceedings and/or monographs (any translations thereof)** of their respective research fields, highlighting those as main author or without their PhD supervisor as co-author (properly referenced, field relevant bibliometric indicators may also be included); preprints may be included, if freely available from a preprint server (preprints should be properly referenced and either a link to the preprint or a DOI should be provided);

2. **Peer recognition: prizes, awards, academy memberships, invited presentations to major conferences**;

3. **Career breaks, diverse career paths and major life events**;

4. **Other contributions to the research community**.

The PI may also include a short, **factual** explanation of the significance of the selected research outputs, the PI's role in producing each of them, and how they demonstrate the PI's capacity to successfully carry out the proposed project.

Part B2

Part B2 Sections a, b, and c:

The scientific proposal **(max. 15 pages)**

At this step part B1 and B2 of the proposals are evaluated (candidates applying for WiC grants have to submit only part B2)

Please abide by the format requirements, see the template on page 34.

References do not count towards the page limit.

The scientific, technical, and/or scholarly aspects of the project should be described more in detail demonstrating the ground-breaking nature of the research, its potential impact and research methodology. The fraction of the applicant's research effort that will be devoted to this project and a full estimation of the real project costs also need to be indicated.

a. State of the art and objectives

Clearly specify the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state of the art in the field. When describing the envisaged research, it should be indicated how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi- or inter- disciplinary aspects.

b. Methodology

Describe the proposed methodology in detail including, as appropriate, key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state of the art, including any particularly novel or unconventional aspects. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.

c. Resources (incl. project costs)

It is mandatory to use the budget table template included in Part B2 to facilitate the assessment of resources by the experts.

State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfill the objectives for the duration of the project. Requested resources should be reasonable and fully justified in the proposal. The requested grant should be consistent with the actual needs to fulfill the objectives of the project.

Specify briefly your commitment to the project, describe the size and nature of the team, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles.

Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment.

When estimating the costs for travel, please also consider participation of the PI and team members in conferences and dissemination events.

Applicants are asked to provide Open Access (free of charge, online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications resulting from STARS projects funded through this call. Open Access can be ensured through green or gold Open Access-routes, and Open Access must in any case be ensured through a repository 6 months after publication, at the latest (12 months for publications from the Social Sciences and Humanities).

Costs for providing immediate Open Access to publications (article processing charges) are eligible and can be charged against the STARS grant if they are incurred during the lifetime of the project. When drafting the budget, it is highly advisable to consider the need to include such expenditure, and if that is the case, to make a realistic estimation of the amount needed.

In the budget table: include a breakdown of the budget subdivided in personnel costs, travel, equipment, consumables, publication costs (including any costs related to Open Access), and other direct costs.

The succinct **"funding ID"** which must specify any current research grants and their subject, and any on-going application for work related to the proposal **must follow the table format indicated in the Part B1 template**. The funding ID **will not count towards the page limits** and needs to be completed with the following information for on-going grants and applications:

Project Title, Funding source, Amount, Period, Role of the PI, Connection to the STARS proposal.

Supporting Documents

Any additional annexes, including documents related to the PhD, the host Department "Letter of Commitment", the evaluation summary report and a scanned copy of a valid ID card or passport, as well as any relevant documents connected to the applicants' requests for eligibility extensions, should be provided and uploaded as separate .pdf documents. These annexes do not count towards the maximum page limit for Part B2.

Subsequent to submission, and only in exceptional cases, the PI may be contacted if this is necessary to clarify questions of eligibility, ethics issues, research integrity or to verify administrative or legal data contained in the proposal.

Letter of Commitment

Candidates applying for a STARS Grant, who do not hold a permanent position at Unipd, should attach a "Letter of Commitment"[8] signed by the Head of the hosting Department stating that the project is feasible and that the hosting Department commits to providing applicants with the facilities, instruments and knowledge necessary to implement their activities.

Once signed, the Letter should be saved in .pdf format and uploaded in the electronic submission system.

A template of the "Letter of Commitment" is available at the end of this Guide.

Ethics

Some frontier research activities and methodologies may have ethical implications or raise questions which require sound ethical assessment in order to ensure that research supported by a STARS grant complies with fundamental ethical principles (see "Ethics issues table", page 39).

The completion of the Ethics table available on the electronic submission system is compulsory for each type of Grant.

Areas excluded from funding:

(i) research activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes;

(ii) research activity intended to modify the genetic makeup of human beings that could make such changes heritable (apart from research relating to cancer treatment

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[8] A PI not holding a permanent position at Unipd is either external to the University or holding a research grant contract (assegno di ricerca) or a fixed-term contract (Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a) – RTD/A) at the University of Padua, under the provisions of Law no. 240/2010, articles 22 and 24.

of the gonads, which may be financed);

(iii) research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer;

(iv) research that leads to the destruction of human embryos.

All research projects shall comply with the relevant national, EU and international ethics related rules and professional codes of conduct.

Ethics Review

The Ethics review process concerns all projects funded by the STARS grants. The applicants should pay particular attention to the ethical aspects of the proposed work and should describe how the ethics issue(s) identified will be addressed in order to adhere to the ethical principles and what will be done to ensure that the activities are compliant with the EU/national legal and ethical requirements.

The main areas that are addressed during the ethics review process include:

1. Human protection (including study participants and researchers)
2. Animal protection and welfare
3. Data protection and privacy
4. Environment protection
5. Participation of non-EU countries
6. Malevolent use of research results.

When submitting their proposal, applicants must complete the Ethics Issues Table. If they answer yes to one or more questions in the Ethics Issues Table, applicants must provide a detailed explanation on how to address the ethics issues.

This will allow a more effective ethics clearance and an accelerated granting process if the proposal is retained for possible funding.

Applicants should be aware that no funding can be provided by Unipd prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethics review procedure.

If a proposal is rejected because of ethics considerations, the applicant will be informed of the grounds for such a decision.

Research Integrity

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data will be considered as breaches of fundamental ethical principles and may result in the rejection of proposals.

No Contact with Reviewers/Experts

Please note that NO direct or indirect contact is permitted between the PI or any team member or any person linked to the PI or to Unipd, AND any expert involved in the peer review evaluation of a STARS proposal. Any such contact may result in the decision to exclude the concerned proposal from the present call.

In view of the confidentiality of the evaluation process, applicants who participate in the Step 2 interview are advised not to share the identity of panel members within their scientific communities.

**STARS Grants 2025
TEMPLATES**

Starting/Consolidator Grant <mark>(please choose one)</mark>

Research proposal [Part B1]

(evaluated in Step 1 and Step 2)

<Proposal Full Title>

<PROPOSAL ACRONYM>

Cover Page[9]:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)

- Name of the PI's Host Institution for the project

- Proposal duration in months

Text highlighted in grey should be deleted.

Proposal summary **(identical to the abstract from the online proposal submission forms)**.

The abstract should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as short description of your research proposal; it will serve in the evaluation process and in communications to contact the potential remote referees. It must therefore be short and precise, and should not contain confidential information.

Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. The abstract must be written in English. There is a limit of 2.000 characters (spaces and line breaks included).

Explain and justify the cross-macro area or cross-scientific area nature of your proposal. There is a limit of 1.000 characters, spaces and line breaks included.

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[9] Please insert the following key details on the header of your Application: [PI's Name Surname – STARS Funding scheme – Project Acronym].

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Section a: *Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposa*l (max. 5 pages, [<u>References do not count towards the page limits</u>])

[The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to the ground-breaking nature of the research project, which will allow evaluation panels to assess, in Step 1 of the evaluation, the feasibility of the outlined scientific approach. Describe the proposed work in the context of the state of the art of the field. References to literature should also be included.]

Please respect the following formatting constraints: use Times New Roman, Arial or similar, at least font size 11, margins (2.0 cm side and 1.5 cm top and bottom), single line spacing.

Section b: Curriculum Vitae and Track Record (max. 4 pages)

[Please use the following template. It should be modified if necessary.]

PERSONAL DETAILS

[Provide your personal details, your education and key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions you have held.]

Family name, First name:

Researcher unique identifier(s) (such as ORCID, Research ID, etc. ...):

Date of birth:

Nationality:

URL for web site:

- **EDUCATION AND KEY QUALIFICATIONS**

DD/MM/YY   PhD

Name of Faculty/Department, Name of University/Institution, Country

Name of PhD Supervisor

YYYY   Master

Name of Faculty/Department, Name of University/Institution, Country

- **CURRENT POSITION(S)**

YYYY – YYYY Current Position

Name of Faculty/Department, Name of University/Institution/Country

YYYY – YYYY Current Position

Name of Faculty/Department, Name of University/Institution/Country

- **PREVIOUS POSITIONS**

YYYY – YYYY Position held

Name of Faculty/Department, Name of University/Institution/Country

YYYY – YYYY Position held

Name of Faculty/Department, Name of University/Institution/Country

- **FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

200? – 200? Scholarship, Name of Faculty/ Department/Centre, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200?   Award, Name of institution/Country

RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS AND PEER RECOGNITION

Research achievements

[Provide a list of up to ten research outputs that demonstrate how you have advanced knowledge in your field with an emphasis on more recent achievements, such as publications, articles deposited in a publicly available preprint server, books, book

chapters, conference proceedings, data sets, software, patents, licenses, standards, start-up businesses or any other research outputs you deem relevant in relation to your research field and your project. You may include a short, factual explanation of the significance of the selected outputs, your role in producing each of them, and how they demonstrate your capacity to successfully carry out your proposed project.]

Peer recognition

[Provide a list of selected examples of significant recognition by your peers if applicable, such as prizes, awards, fellowships, elected academy memberships, invited presentations to major conferences or any other examples of significant recognition you deem relevant in relation to your research field and project. You may include a short explanation of the significance of the listed examples.]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[You may provide relevant additional information on your research career to provide context to the evaluation panels when assessing your research achievements and peer recognition as described above.]

Career breaks, diverse career paths and major life events

[You may include a short factual explanation of career breaks or diverse career paths such as secondments, volunteering, part-time work, time spent in different sectors or the effects of major life events such as long term illness as well as the effects of pandemic restrictions on research productivity.]

Other contributions to the research community

[You may include a list of particularly noteworthy contributions to the research community you have made other than research achievements and peer recognition and a short explanation of these contributions. The purpose of this section is to allow the panels to take a more rounded view of your career and achievements and to ensure that any additional responsibilities, commitments and leadership roles that you have taken on beyond your individual research activities are recognised and taken into account.]

Starting/Consolidator/Wild Card Grants (<mark>please choose one</mark>)

Research proposal [Part B2]

(not evaluated in Step 1)

Part B2: *The scientific proposal* (max. 15 pages)

Text highlighted in grey should be deleted.

Please respect the following formatting constraints: use Times New Roman, Arial or similar, at least font size 11, margins (2.0 cm side and 1.5 cm top and bottom), single line spacing.

Section a. State-of-the-art and objectives

Section b. Methodology

Section c. Resources (including project costs)

(Note: State and fully justify the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfill the objectives for the duration of the project. To facilitate the assessment of resources by the experts, the use of the following budget table is compulsory. All eligible costs requested, should be included in the budget. Please, note that the cost categories (as like as their amount) must be identical to the ones part of the online submission form. If any inconsistency occurs, only the online submission form's figures will be considered valid. **Please use whole Euro values only**.)

Cost Category			Total in Euro
	Personnel	PI	
		Postdocs	
		Students (PhDs)	
	Travel		
	Equipment		
	Other goods and services	Consumables	
		Publications (including Open Access fees), etc.	
		Other (please specify)	
Total Estimated Eligible Costs			

The budget is divided in the following cost categories:

Personnel costs

- **PI:** costs covering the PI salary (contract for the PI/CPI: max 42,000.00 euros per year; gross amount of 105,000.00 euros for 30 months). PIs benefiting from a

STARS CPI must be fully dedicated to the STARS project.

- **Postdocs**: costs for one or more research grant contract/s (e.g. Post doc/ Research Contracts under the provisions of Law No. 240/2010 et seq.) to be assigned to researchers recruited on the project. The minimum duration of a research grant is 24 months and its cost is approximately 40,000.00 euros per year (gross amount).

- **Students (PhDs)**: it is possible to co-fund a **PhD position** (for which the PI has to act as the PhD supervisor or co-supervisor).

Costs for covering fellowships or researcher tenure track contracts (RTT) are not eligible.

Travel: PI's and team members' travel costs and related subsistence allowances.

Equipment: costs of equipment or other assets.

Other goods and services

This category covers the following items (the list is not exhaustive):

- **Consumables**: costs for consumables and supplies (e.g. animals, raw materials etc.).
- **Publications**: costs for scientific publications, including Open Access (e.g. books, manuscripts, articles, digital copies, etc.).
- **Other**:
  - costs related to intellectual property rights (IPR)
  - dissemination and communication costs (e.g. organization of conferences/workshops, videos, etc.)
  - translation costs
  - short-term scientists' visits
  - sequencing
  - …

Costs are eligible if their direct link to the project and their necessity for the project is demonstrated. Costs must be incurred during the project duration.

The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. The experts assess the estimated costs carefully; unjustified budgets will be consequently reduced.

Briefly specify your commitment to the project in the *Resources* section. Please note that you should perform and complete your proposed research activity in full and you are engaging with the University of Padua in submitting a project proposal (at the first eligible call before the end of the STARS project) to either an ERC call or to a different funding programme, featuring an equivalent structure as the ERC calls (Art. 8 – Duties of PIs of funded projects, STARS@UNIPD 2025 Call for proposals), i.e.:

- a selection process based on the researcher's curriculum and career development;

- the funding for the contract and the research activities of the PI is provided to the Host Institution;

- the evaluation criteria are comparable to those of the ERC, providing for independent, open, transparent and merit-based selection procedures through scientific committees involving qualified experts.

An exemplary and non-exhaustive list of the above alternative programmes is provided herein:

1. International funding

- HFSPO-Human Frontier Science Programme Organization: funds three-year long-term fellowships. This transnational organization, financed by member states including Italy, operates in the Life Sciences macro-area (LS), but it also support intersectoral projects with Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE) and Social Sciences and Humanities (SH);

- EMBO-European Molecular Biology Organization: funds two-year long-term fellowships and four-year grants, as like as EMBO Young Investigator. This European organization, financed by member states (including Italy) in favor of the EMBC (European Molecular Biology Council). EMBO supports projects in the Life Sciences macroarea (LS);

- Branco Weiss Fellowship – Society in Science: global fellowships programme, founded in 2002 and coordinated by ETH Zurich, which supports to exceptionally qualified researchers in all areas. The programme funds 5-year post-doc fellowships (CHF 100,000.00 per year), characterized by an international and transdisciplinary nature.

2. National (Italian) funding

- AIRC: funds either fellowships designed for the training of young researchers, or various five-year grants, such as Start-up grants, My First AIRC Grants, Investigator Grants. The foundation supports projects in the Life Sciences macroarea (LS);

- Fondo Italiano per la Scienza (FIS): Ministry of University and Research's (MUR) programme designed to support excellent research, in any field, within highly qualified schemes very similar to those of the ERC;

- Progetti di Ricerca di Interesse Nazionale (PRIN): designed to fund research projects, in any scientific field, in order to promote the national scientific researches, and foster the participation in competitive calls of Framework Programmes of UE. The program supports projects requiring the cooperation of various universities/institutions, due to the complexity and nature of the proposals, which the financing needs exceed the normal availability of one institution.

If the PI wishes to submit a project proposal to a call (national or international) different from the ERC ones, (s)he will have to submit a request to the STARS@Unipd Internal Commission. The Commission will evaluate the characteristics of the call and, in order to confirm or deny their suitability. The Commission, in cooperation with the International Research Office, will monitor the ERC (or alternative) applications actually submitted by the beneficiaries of a STARS grant.

Appendix: All current grants and on-going / submitted grant applications of the PI (Funding ID)

Mandatory information (does not count towards the page limits)

Current research grants (Please indicate "No funding" when applicable)

Project Title	Funding source	Amount (Euros)	Period (start-end date)	Role of the PI	Relation to current STARS proposal[10]

On-going / submitted grant applications (Please indicate "None" when applicable)

Project Title	Funding source	Amount (Euros)	Period (expected start-end date)	Role of the PI	Relation to current STARS proposal[3]

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[10] Clearly describe any scientific overlap between your STARS application and any current research grants or on-going grant applications.

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Useful Links regarding rules and policies at UNIPD

The following resources are mentioned in the "STARS GRANTS 2025 Call for proposals" and in this STARS GRANTS 2025 "Guide for Applicants & Application templates". Please note that the short name Unipd stands for University of Padua, Italy.

- University of Padua (Unipd) Internal Regulation for the award of research grants pursuant to art. 22 of Law No. 240/2010 and subsequent modifications and integrations
  https://www.unipd.it/sites/unipd.it/files/2020/REG_assegni_art20_13112020.pdf (in Italian)
  https://www.unipd.it/en/sites/en.unipd.it/files/UNIPD_REG_Research_Grants_ENG%20%281%29.pdf (in English)
  https://elearning.unipd.it/infodiritto/mod/book/view.php?id=859

- The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C) | *Carta europea e Codice di reclutamento dei ricercatori*
  https://www.unipd.it/carta-europea-codice-reclutamento-ricercatori (in Italian)
  https://www.unipd.it/en/hr-excellence-research (in English)

- Rules and recommendations regarding Open access publications at the University of Padua (in Italian)
  https://www.unipd.it/sites/unipd.it/files/2017/REG%20accesso%20aperto%20produz%20scientifica%2001082017.pdf

- Data protection and personal data handling Rules and recommendations adopted at Unipd
  https://www.unipd.it/privacy (in Italian)
  https://www.unipd.it/en/privacy (in English)

- EU GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679, art. 13
  http://www.privacy-regulation.eu/en/13.htm

- EU Regulation 428/2009 concerning dual use items in the sense of Regulation
  https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:134:0001:0269:en:PDF

Ethics Issues Table and self-assessment

You will find the following questions in the last two sections of the online platform for electronic submission. This template is just for your prior consideration and you should not upload it.

1. HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS AND HUMAN EMBRYOS		
Does this activity involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Will they be directly derived from embryos within this project?	Yes	No
Are they previously established cells lines?	Yes	No
Are the cell lines registered in the European registry for human embryonic stem cell lines?	Yes	No
Does your research involve the use of human embryos?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Will the research lead to their destruction?	Yes	No
2. HUMANS		
Does this activity involve human participants?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Are they volunteers for non medical studies (e.g. for social or human sciences research?)	Yes	No
Are they healthy volunteers for medical studies?	Yes	No
Are they patients for medical studies?	Yes	No
Are they potentially vulnerable individual or groups?	Yes	No
Are they children/minors?	Yes	No
Are they other persons unable to give informed consent?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve interventions (physical also including imaging technology, behavioural treatments, etc.) on the study participants?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Does it involve invasive techniques?	Yes	No
Does it involve collection of biological samples?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve conducting a clinical study as defined by the Clinical Trial Regulation (EU 536/2014)? (using pharmaceuticals, biologicals, radiopharmaceuticals, or advanced therapy medicinal products)	Yes	No
IF YES		
Is it a clinical trial?	Yes	No
Is it a low-intervention clinical trial?	Yes	No
3. HUMAN CELLS / TISSUES (not covered by section 1)		
Does this activity involve the use of human cells or tissues?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Are they human embryonic or foetal cells or tissues?	Yes	No

Are they available commercially?	Yes	No
Are they obtained within this project?	Yes	No
Are they obtained from another project, laboratory or institution?	Yes	No
Are they obtained from biobank?	Yes	No
4. PERSONAL DATA		
Does this activity involve processing of personal data?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Does it involve the processing of special categories of personal data (e.g.: genetic, biometric and health data, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs)?	Yes	No
Does it involve profiling, systematic monitoring of individuals, or processing of large scale of special categories of data or intrusive methods of data processing (such as, surveillance, geolocation tracking etc.)?	Yes	No
Does your research involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of preexisting data sets or sources, merging existing data set)?	Yes	No
Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Specify the type of personal data and countries involved: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		
Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Specify the type of personal data and countries involved: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		
Does your research involve the processing of personal data related to criminal convictions or offences?	Yes	No
5. ANIMALS		
Does this activity involve animals?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Are they vertebrates?	Yes	No
Are they non-human primates (NHP)?	Yes	No
Are they genetically modified?	Yes	No
Are they cloned farm animals?	Yes	No
Are they endangered species?	Yes	No
6. NON-EU COUNTRIES		
Will some of the activities be carried out in non-EU countries?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Specify the countries involved: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		

In case non-EU countries are involved, do the activities undertaken in these countries raise potential ethics issues?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Specify the countries involved: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		
Is it planned to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)?	Yes	No
Is it planned to import any material (other than data) from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? For data imports, see section 4.	Yes	No
IF YES		
Specify material and countries involved: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		
Is it planned to export any material (other than data) from the EU to non-EU countries? For data exports, see section 4.	Yes	No
IF YES		
Specify material and countries involved: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		
Does this activity involve low and/or lower middle income countries? (if yes, detail the benefit-sharing actions planned in the self-assessment)	Yes	No
Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the research at risk?	Yes	No
7. ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH and SAFETY		
Does this activity involve the use of substances of processes that may cause harm to the environment, to animals or plants (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?	Yes	No
Does this activity deal with endangered fauna and/or flora/protected areas?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to humans, including those performing the activity (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?	Yes	No
8. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE		
Does this activity involve the development, deployment and/or use of Artificial Intelligence-based systems?	Yes	No
9. OTHER ETHICS ISSUES		
Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Please specify: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		

Describe how the issue(s) identified in the Ethics Issues Table above will be addressed in order to adhere to the ethical principles and what will be done to ensure that the activities are compliant with the EU/national legal and ethical requirements.

I confirm that I have taken into account all ethics issues above and that, if any ethics issues apply, I will complete the ethics self-assessment as described in the guidelines

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"How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment" (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf). More general information and an e-Library containing the most important pieces of legislation relevant to research activities can be found on the Europa website https://commission.europa.eu/research-and-innovation_en?fuseaction=public.topic&id=1407.

Security Issues Table and self-assessment

You will find the following questions in the last two sections of the online platform for electronic submission. This template is just for your prior consideration and you should not upload it.

1. EU CLASSIFIED INFORMATION (EUCI)		
Does this activity involve information and/or materials requiring protection against unauthorised disclosure (EUCI)?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Is the activity going to use classified information as background information?	Yes	No
Is the activity going to generate EU classified foreground information as result?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve non-EU countries which need to have access to EUCI?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Do the non-EU countries concerned have a security of information agreement with the EU?	Yes	No
2. MISUSE		
Does this activity have the potential for misuse of results?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Does the activity provide knowledge, materials and technologies that could be channeled into crime and/or terrorism?	Yes	No
Could the activity result in the development of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons and the means for their delivery?	Yes	No
3. OTHER SECURITY ISSUES		
Does this activity involve information and/or materials subject to national security restrictions?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Please specify: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		
Are there any other security issues that should be taken into consideration?	Yes	No
IF YES		
Please specify: (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		

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[Print on the official letterhead of the University of Padua hosting Department - Please note that the Letter is mandatory for <mark>STARS - Starting Grants PIs</mark>]

Letter of commitment of the hosting Department
STARS Grants Call 2025

The University of Padua (*Università degli Studi di Padova*), Department of <mark><< name, in English, of the Department that is associated to the proposal >></mark> (*Dipartimento di* <mark><<name, in Italian, of the Department that is associated to the proposal>></mark>), confirms its intention to host <mark><< Name of the PI>></mark>, PI of the project <mark><< Title - acronym of the project >></mark>.

Should the proposal be funded, the University of Padua, Department of <mark><<name of the Department>></mark> commits itself to:

a) employ the Principal Investigator for the duration of the grant [<mark>only if the PI is not employed by Unipd</mark>] :

b) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the Principal Investigator

c) guarantee the Principal Investigator's scientific independence, in particular for the:

- use of the budget to achieve the scientific objectives;
- authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors those who have contributed substantially to the work;
- preparation of scientific reports for the project;
- selection and supervision of the other team members (hosted, and employed, by the Department, in line with the profiles needed to conduct the research);
- possibility to apply independently for funding;
- access to appropriate space and facilities for conducting the research.

d) provide — during the implementation of the project — research support to the Principal Investigator and the team members (in terms of infrastructure, equipment, access rights, products and other services necessary for conducting the research);

e) support the Principal Investigator and provide administrative assistance;

f) take all measures to implement the principles set out in the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers – in particular regarding working conditions, transparent recruitment processes based on merit and career development – and ensure that the Principal Investigator, researchers and third parties involved in the project are aware of them.

Date ………………….

Name of the Head of Department   Signature of the Head of Department

…………………………….   ………………….………………….

List of Departments at the University of Padua

Please, find herein the list of   Departments at the University of Padua, in Italian and English. The candidate has to choose one as his/her Host Institution, indicating the name (only in Italian) in the application form on PICA, where a drop-down list is available.

Dipartimento	Department
Dipartimento di Agronomia Animali Alimenti Risorse Naturali e Ambiente	Department of Agronomy, Food, Natural Resources, Animals and Environment
Dipartimento di Beni Culturali: archeologia, storia dell'arte, del cinema e della musica	Department of Cultural Heritage: Archaeology and History of Art, Cinema and Music
Dipartimento di Biologia	Department of Biology
Dipartimento di Biomedicina Comparata ed Alimentazione	Department of Comparative Biomedicine and Food Science
Dipartimento di Diritto Privato e Critica del Diritto	Department of Private Law and Critique of Law
Dipartimento di Diritto Pubblico, Internazionale e Comunitario	Department of Public, International and Community Law
Dipartimento di Filosofia, Sociologia, Pedagogia e Psicologia Applicata	Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology
Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia "Galileo Galilei"	Department of Physics and Astronomy
Dipartimento di Geoscienze	Department of Geosciences
Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile, Edile e Ambientale	Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering
Dipartimento di Ingegneria dell'Informazione	Department of Information Engineering
Dipartimento di Ingegneria Industriale	Department of Industrial Engineering
Dipartimento di Matematica "Tullio Levi-Civita"	Department of Mathematics
Dipartimento di Medicina	Department of Medicine
Dipartimento di Medicina Animale, Produzioni e Salute	Department of Animal Medicine, Production and Health
Dipartimento di Medicina Molecolare	Department of Molecular Medicine
Dipartimento di Neuroscienze	Department of Neuroscience
Dipartimento di Psicologia dello Sviluppo e della Socializzazione	Department of Developmental Psychology and Socialisation
Dipartimento di Psicologia Generale	Department of General Psychology

Dipartimento	Department
Dipartimento di Salute della Donna e del Bambino	Department of Women's and Children's Health
Dipartimento di Scienze Biomediche	Department of Biomedical Sciences
Dipartimento di Scienze cardio-toraco-vascolari e sanità pubblica	Department of Cardiac, Thoracic, Vascular Sciences and Public Health
Dipartimento di Scienze Chimiche	Department of Chemical Sciences
Dipartimento di Scienze Chirurgiche, Oncologiche e Gastroenterologiche	Department of Surgery, Oncology and Gastroenterology
Dipartimento di Scienze del Farmaco	Department of Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences
Dipartimento di Scienze Economiche e Aziendali "Marco Fanno"	Department of Economics and Management
Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche, Giuridiche e Studi Internazionali	Department of Political Science, Law, and International Studies
Dipartimento di Scienze Statistiche	Department of Statistical Sciences
Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche Geografiche e dell'Antichità	Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World
Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari	Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies
Dipartimento di Tecnica e Gestione dei Sistemi Industriali	Department of Management and Engineering
Dipartimento di Territorio e Sistemi Agro-forestali	Department of Land, Environment, Agriculture and Forestry