



Supporting TALEnt in ReSearch@University of Padua (STARS@UNIPD) 2025 Call for proposals

Call opening: 20 December 2024
Application deadline:
21 March 2025, 1 p.m. (Italian time zone)

PREAMBULE

The University of Padua (Unipd or University) uses the programme called “*Talent in Research*” to support excellent research to be performed on its premises by high-potential researchers.

“*Talent in Research*” is characterized by several initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of young researchers in competitive calls for proposals, as well as attracting researchers from abroad, offering financial support to the most deserving projects, whose research value is acknowledged by internationally renowned experts. The programme includes the following actions:

- “**Talent@Unipd**”, a scouting initiative open to all scientists, with no exclusion of citizenship, who are willing to choose Unipd as their Host Institution in their applications for the European Research Council (ERC) funded researches (<https://www.unipd.it/talent>);
- “**Supporting TALEnt in ReSearch@University of Padua - STARS@UNIPD**”, currently at its fifth edition, encourages international, high quality, innovative and ambitious research in Padua and boosts the participation of Unipd in ERC calls, promoting an open and positive attitude towards international funding opportunities for basic research within the European context (<http://www.unipd.it/stars>).

The STARS@UNIPD - 2025 call for proposals, comprises two types of funding supporting individual research projects, proposed by a Principal Investigator (PI) at a "Starting" or "Consolidator" career stage. A third type of funding is specifically addressed to PIs who submitted an ERC application in the 2023 and 2024 calls for proposals, choosing the University of Padua as their Host Institution, and who scored an "A" in the second step of the evaluation process, being considered eligible for funding, but not funded due to budget limits.

Candidates who wish to apply to the STARS@UNIPD - 2025 call for proposals can submit a project in one of the 28 scientific research areas, grouped in three Macro-areas corresponding to the three ERC research domains as described in Annex 1.

In order to reward excellence and foster a high-level, open, transparent and merit-based competition, as well as promoting an increasingly broad participation of researchers in international competitive calls for proposals, the evaluation process and criteria of the STARS@UNIPD call will be similar to those of the ERC. The application forms themselves, even if slightly simplified, match the templates of the ERC.



For the STARS-StG type, researchers eligible for funding who have planned the cost of their contract in the project budget (option “with contract for the PI” in the tables referred to in Article 3 of this call), the University of Padua will provide a contract as a type B¹ research grant (*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.

Art. 1 – DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

The **STARS@UNIPD** call for proposals provides funding for research projects lasting 30 months, proposed by researchers with excellent scientific qualifications willing to launch or consolidate an independent research activity and a research team at Unipd.

With a “bottom-up” approach and no predetermined priorities, STARS grants are addressed to PIs of any age and nationality, who wish to pursue research at one of Unipd Departments and who are able to demonstrate the innovative nature, the ambition and the feasibility of their proposed scientific research activity.

This call for proposals includes the following funding schemes:

- **STARS Starting Grants (STARS-StG)**: designed to fund PIs who are beginning to establish their own research team and/or to start their own independent research activity;
- **STARS Consolidator Grants (STARS-CoG)**: designed to fund PIs, who are already conducting research at Unipd and are consolidating their own research team and/or their own independent research;
- **STARS Wild Card Grants (STARS-WiC)**: designed to fund PIs who are already conducting research at Unipd and submitted a project to the 2023 and 2024 ERC calls for proposals, indicating Unipd as their Host Institution, obtaining an “A” in the second step of the evaluation process, being considered eligible for funding, but not funded due to budget limits.

Unipd will proportionally fund research projects amongst the Macro-areas and the types of grants, based on the number of eligible applications and of Wild Card projects submitted.

Art. 2 – INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

For each type of grant, PIs of any age and nationality meeting the following criteria may apply:

- ✓ **STARS-StG**: the PI has defended their first Doctoral degree within a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 5 years prior to 1 January 2025; eligibility extensions are provided for in the “Specific Eligibility Criteria” described in Annex 2;

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



Under penalty of exclusion from the ranking list and consequent impossibility of proceeding with the award of the grant, the 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 University², provided it is compatible with the implementation of the STARS³ project 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, that is incompatible with the implementation of the STARS³ project and expires by December 31, 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.
- ✓ **STARS-CoG:** the PI is a tenured professor or a fixed-term researcher Type b)⁴ (RTD/B) or researcher tenure track (RTT)⁵ at Unipd, who has defended their first Doctoral degree within a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 years prior to 1 January 2025; eligibility extensions are provided for in the “Specific Eligibility Criteria” described in Annex 2.
- ✓ **STARS-WiC:** the PI is a tenured professor or a fixed-term researcher Type b)⁶ (RTD/B) or researcher tenure track (RTT)⁷ 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*, obtaining 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.

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 Under the provisions of Law No. 240/2010, article 24, par. 3.

⁵ Under the provisions of Law No. 79/2022.

⁶ Under the provisions of Law No. 240/2010, article 24, par. 3.

⁷ Under the provisions of Law No. 79/2022.



In the following sections of this call, 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.

In any case, candidates are admitted to the selection procedure with reserve, and at any time, Unipd may exclude them if it identifies the absence of one or more participation requirements.

Art. 3 - PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

3.1 Submission process

Each candidate may submit a single research proposal in one of the 28 research areas within the three Marco-areas corresponding to the three ERC research domains. The following procedure applies:

- ✓ in order to submit their proposal, candidates must exclusively follow the on line procedure available at this link: <https://pica.cineca.it/unipd/>. They must first register on the platform and follow the instructions described in Annex 2;
- ✓ the proposal must be submitted within the opening and closing date of the call. The STARS@UNIPD 2025 call will open on 20 December 2024 and close on **21 March 2025 at 1 p.m.** (Italian time zone). Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered eligible;
- ✓ the proposal must be written in English;
- ✓ the proposal must be completed in its entirety and must include all the required documents; should any document in the application be written in any language other than English, an English translation must be included following the instructions in Annex 2;
- ✓ if a STARS-StG applicant is either external to Unipd or holds a fixed-term Type a) researcher position at Unipd, their application must include a "Letter of commitment" duly signed by the Head of the Department chosen by the candidate as their hosting department. Such procedure is detailed in Annex 2;
- ✓ once the online proposal procedure is completed, the candidate must sign the application according to the instructions provided on the online platform.

The system performs a general check on the completeness of the required information and reports any errors that have to be corrected before submission. Once the application is signed, it can be submitted to Unipd. Only proposals submitted via the online system will be considered eligible.



3.2 Contents of the proposal

The application folder consists of:

- ✓ an administrative form containing the PI personal data and some general information about the research proposal;
- ✓ the *Research Proposal*, drawn up according to the forms included in Annex 2 and uploaded in a .pdf format. The *Research Proposal* comprises the following:
 - **Research Proposal [Part B1]**: extended synopsis, PI's CV and track record;
 - **Research Proposal [Part B2]**: scientific proposal.

PIs applying for WiC grants should only complete part B2 of the proposal, extrapolating a line of research from their original ERC project, which must be consistent with the 30-month STARS project duration and budget of the STARS grant.

For all types of grants, the application form includes a table related to the ethical and security implications ("*Ethics and Security Issues Table*" described in Annex 2) and an Ethics and Security self-assessment of the proposed research, which certifies the project's compliance to the national, European and international legislation on ethical and security issues.

The application form, according to the type of grants selected by the candidate, also includes the documents listed below:

1. **STARS-StG**: a *Letter of Commitment* must be provided by PIs who do not hold a permanent position at Unipd or are external to Unipd. The letter has to be duly signed by the Head of the Department that the candidate has chosen for carrying out their project. Considering the proposal feasibility, the Head of Department supports the access to the Department structures, tools and useful knowledge that may be necessary for the implementation of the project;
2. **STARS-WiC**: the *Evaluation Summary Report* issued by the ERCEA for the project submitted in the 2023 and 2024 calls for proposals, which obtained an "A" as a final score but was not funded.

This call for proposals, its attachments and any document that may be relevant to the submission process are available on the website <http://www.unipd.it/stars2025> (in Italian) and <http://www.unipd.it/en/stars2025> (in English).

3.3 Budget

The budget of STARS projects includes an amount covering research costs (RC), which depends on the scientific domain of the proposal. For STARS-StG, a portion of the budget may cover the potential cost of the PI's remuneration through the activation of a PI contract (CPI) at the University of Padua, provided the PI does not hold a permanent position at the University or is a fixed-term researcher contract Type a) (*Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a - RTD/A*) at the University⁸, whose contract, compatible with the execution of the STARS project, does not cover the entire duration of the project. Additionally, for STARS-StG, a mobility allowance (MA) is provided to cover mobility-related expenses for researchers who can certify that they have resided or carried out their main professional activity in Italy for no more than 12 months in the last 36 months prior to the call deadline.

Each STARS-StG project budget may include:

⁸ Under the provisions of Law No. 240/2010, Art. 24 par. 3.



1. the cost of a PI contract (CPI) (subject to the possibility of the additional contribution outlined in the following point 3); such cost cannot exceed 42,000 Eur gross amount/year for 30 months, reaching a maximum of 105,000 Eur gross for the whole 30 months of project;
2. a maximum funding to cover research costs (RC) of 175,000 Eur for the Macro-areas LS and PE and 100,000 euros for the Macro-area SH (Table 1);
3. a contribution for the Mobility allowance, amounting to 500 Eur gross per month, for 30 months, up to a total of 15,000 Eur maximum.

Applicants for STARS-StGs holding a fixed-term contract Type a) (*Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a - RTD/A*) at the University of Padua, 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. As an alternative, 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)
	Macro-area PE: Physical Sciences and Engineering	Macro-area LS: Life Sciences	Macro-area SH: 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 - STARS-StG eligible costs

Each STARS-CoG project budget may include a maximum funding covering **research costs (RC)** of 175,000 Eur for the Macro-areas LS and PE, and up to 100,000 Eur for the Macro-area SH, **for 30 months** (Table 2).

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

Table 2 - STARS-CoG eligible costs

Each STARS-WiC project budget may include a **maximum funding** covering **research costs (RC)** of 175,000 Eur for the Macro-areas LS and PE and of 100,000 Eur for the Macro-area SH for a period of **30 months** (Table 3).

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

Table 3 – STARS-WiC eligible costs



Art. 4 – EVALUATION COMMITTEE

An Evaluation Committee will be appointed for the selection of proposals that are eligible for funding.

Such Evaluation Committee is composed by a maximum of 28 external experts of recognized international standing, selected among the panel members of the competitive European projects funded by the ERC and/or ERC grantees themselves, who will be assigned to 3 sub-committees matching the three ERC domains:

- PE: Physical Sciences and Engineering;
- LS: Life Sciences;
- SH: Social Sciences and Humanities.

The subcommittees will be composed by 11, 9, 8 experts maximum (PE=11, LS=9, SH=8).

Three sub-committee coordinators will be appointed with the task of finding the other members of their own sub-committee, one for each ERC sector different from their own, and coordinating the work of the three sub-committees (Annex 1). If no projects are submitted within a certain scientific area, no experts will be appointed in that area.

Projects admitted to the peer-review process (Step 2), will be evaluated by anonymous independent reviewers, expert in the scientific areas of the projects, appointed by the sub-committees.

The Evaluation Committee, chaired by three sub-committee coordinators acting as Presidents, will collaborate with a Unipd commission (STARS@Unipd Internal Commission) composed by the Vice Rector for Research (Coordinator), the Head of the Research and Business Relations Area (ARRI) and the Head of the International Research Office of the University of Padua.

The STARS@Unipd Internal Commission will screen projects for eligibility and support the Evaluation Committee in the preliminary phase, confirming whether financial, human and instrumental resources declared for the projects are actually available. The STARS@Unipd Internal Commission will be in charge of all communication activities taking place among the Evaluation Committee, Departments and Unipd bodies involved in the programme.

Art. 5 – SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process includes an eligibility check of all applications followed by two different evaluation steps for the STARS-StG and STARS-CoG grants and by a single step for the STARS-WiC grants.

The selection process will be carried out according to the following indicative timetable:



Opening of the call for proposals	20 December 2024
Deadline for proposals submission	21 March 2025 h.1 p.m.
Eligibility check	23 April 2025
Pre-selection (Step 1 for StG and CoG) and evaluation (single step for WiC)	31 July 2025
Evaluation of proposals (Step 2)	31 October 2025
Interview	November 2025
Evaluation results	December 2025
Approval of the ranking list of projects selected for funding	December 2025
Projects' starting date	1 February 2026
Latest deadline for projects' starting date	31 March 2026

5.1 Eligibility check

After the call deadline, all proposals will be checked to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements in accordance with Art. 2 in this call. Eligibility is checked on the basis of the information the PI provided in the administrative form and the correctness and completeness of the documents enclosed in the application. The results of the eligibility check will be published on the following website: <http://www.unipd.it/stars2025> (in Italian) and <http://www.unipd.it/en/stars2025> (in English). PIs excluded from the selection process due to the lack of one or more individual requirements for participation will be informed via e-mail, detailing also the procedure for a possible redress. Upon receipt of the notification of ineligibility, the candidate has 5 working days to report any mistakes in the eligibility check carried out by Unipd and the redress will be evaluated by the STARS@Unipd Internal Commission. After the above mentioned time lapse, the disqualification becomes definitive.

The University reserves the right to disqualify proposals at any time if one or more requirements for participation are missing.

5.2 Evaluation criteria of StG and CoG proposals

Scientific excellence will be the sole criterion of evaluation (Annex 2). Each proposal will be evaluated, at every step of the selection process, on the basis of the following two principles:

- the ground-breaking nature, ambition, and feasibility of the project;
- the PI's scientific expertise, creativity, and commitment.

A PI of a STARS-StG project must have already demonstrated the potential to conduct independent research and must have proven scientific experience. For example, a StG PI must have published at least one important publication as main author or without their PhD supervisor.

The PI should also be able to demonstrate a promising track record of achievements in line with their field of studies and career stage, highlighting the following:

- the most significant publications (as main author) in international peer-reviewed scientific journals or in leading journals in their research field;
- the participation in national or international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes and other qualifications that may be useful for the selection process.

A PI of a STARS-CoG project must have already demonstrated research independence and must have proven scientific experience. For example, a CoG PI must have published important publications as main author or showing their fundamental scientific contribution. The PI should also be able to demonstrate a consolidated track record of achievements which are appropriate to their field of studies and career stage, highlighting the following:



- the most significant publications (as main author) in major international peer-reviewed scientific journals or in leading journals in their research field;
- the participation in established national or international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes and other qualifications that may be useful for the selection process.

5.3 Pre-selection (Step 1)

At Step 1, only part B1 of the STARS-StG and STARS-CoG proposals will be assessed.

Each proposal will be reviewed by the member of the Macro-area sub-committee who is expert in the scientific area indicated in the administrative form.

At the end of Step 1, every sub-committee will rank the proposals in their Macro-area on the basis of the scores given by the experts.

At the end of Step 1, candidates will be informed that their proposal:

- A. is of excellent quality and passes to the following step of the evaluation;
- B. is not of sufficient quality to pass to the following step of the evaluation.

The number of proposals passing to Step 2 will approximately double the number of fundable projects.

WiC proposals will be assessed by the expert of the Macro-area sub-committee in charge of the scientific area indicated in the administrative form of the proposal. Only Part B2 - *Research Proposal* will be evaluated. The Evaluation Committee will express an evaluation comment on the WiC projects and propose the allocation of funds to the ones that are considered worth funding.

Results will be published on the following website: <http://www.unipd.it/stars2025> (in Italian) and <http://www.unipd.it/en/stars2025> (in English)

5.4 Evaluation of the proposals (Step 2)

Proposals for STARS-StG and STARS-CoG grants that are admitted to Step 2 will be assessed in full (parts B1 and B2) by the sub-committee of the Macro-area in charge of the scientific area indicated in the administrative form. The sub-committees will make use of 3 reviewers' evaluations: two evaluations are provided by external experts and one is provided by the relevant sub-committee member.

PIs of STARS-StG and STARS-CoG proposals will be invited to an interview of approximately 30 minutes with the relevant Macro-area sub-committee. The interview consists of a brief presentation of the research project and of the PI's CV, followed by a question-and-answer session related to the project and its budget.

Candidates will be notified of the date/time of the interview by e-mail (at the address indicated in the application form) with a notice of approximately 3-4 weeks. The interviews will be held in English, in person at Unipd or via Zoom. No reimbursement will be provided for the participation in the interview. In compliance with Annex 2, absence, or unavailability to attend the interview shall be deemed as a withdrawal from the selection process and will result in the exclusion of the proposal from funding.

Each Macro-area sub-committee will use the information gathered from the reviewers' evaluations and the interviews to jointly draw the final ranking for StG and CoG proposals. The sub-committees will propose the budget allocation for those proposals which are deemed fundable.



Art. 6 – APPOINTMENT OF THE EVALUTATION COMMITTEE AND APPROVAL OF THE RANKING LIST

The Evaluation Committee referred to in Art. 4 in this call is appointed through a Unipd Rector's decree and is in charge of formulating the list of proposals selected for funding, which will be submitted to the University Board of Directors for its final approval.

Art. 7 – ALLOCATION OF FUNDING

STARS-StG PIs who have included the cost of their own contract in the project (option "with contract for the PI" in the tables referred to in Art. 3 of this call⁹), will be awarded a type B research grant contract (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*)¹⁰ by the University of Padua, pursuant to Art. 3, paragraph 2, letter b) of the current Regulations for the Awarding of Research Grants at the University of Padua. The grant will cover for the amount specified in the project budget, net of mandatory legal contributions. Unipd reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to replace the position as holder of a "type B research grant contract" (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*) with another position, economically equivalent, which may be made available by amendments introduced to Law No. 240/2010.

The Department hosting the research shall agree with the PI on the contract starting date, under penalty of forfeiture. Such date shall not be later than 31 March 2026; failure to sign the contract within the aforementioned deadline will result in the forfeiture of the funding. An extension to the agreed date may be allowed by the STARS@UNIPD internal Commission in exceptional cases, for example if a project awaits for the ethics review, in case of prolonged visa procedures, or of justified and documented personal or professional problems.

At the time of the contract signing and/or project start, PIs must, under penalty of exclusion from the STARS ranking list and funding, meet the requirements necessary for the formalization of the STARS contract, pursuant to Article 2 of the call.

At the start of the STARS project, PIs holding a fixed-term Type a) research position who have included the cost of their own contract in the project must have at least 12 months remaining on their position to ensure the subsequent activation of a research grant. This grant would cover the months between the end of the research position and the conclusion of the STARS project. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the cancellation of the funding allocation and the possible progression of the ranking list.

Recipients of STARS-StG funding who are already holders of a research grant (RG) funded by previous projects must resign before the start of the STARS project and activate a new PI research grant. Alternatively, they may consider requesting a well-justified postponement of the start of their STARS project.

The signing of the PI contract shall not imply a subordinate employment relationship or ensure any rights to access permanent Unipd staff positions.

⁹ PIs who include in the STARS project budget the cost of their own contract (CPI) are either external to the University of Padua or holders of a fixed-term researcher contract Type a) (*Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a - RTD/A*) at the University of Padua, which expires before the end of the STARS project.



Unipd will make the project funding available to hosting Departments, as described below:

- ✓ for the STARS-StG category, if it is necessary to activate a contract for the PI, the research activity will commence upon the signing of the contract and will have a duration of 30 months. In the event that the PI's employment relationship with the University of Padua changes during the project, the project may continue, but the remaining amount allocated for the PI contract (CPI) will be retrieved and recovered in the University's budget;
- ✓ for the STARS-StG category, if the PI is a fixed-term researcher Type a) (*Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo a - RTD/A*) at the University of Padua, compatible with the execution of the STARS project, and whose contract expires before the end of the STARS project, the funding will be made available to the PI's Department and will remain usable for 30 months. If necessary, upon the expiration of the researcher's fixed-term contract and until the end of the STARS project, a PI contract (CPI) will be awarded to the PI, provided that the requirements established by the applicable regulations for this specific contract are met. Such a contract must not exceed a maximum annual gross cost to the institution of 42,000 Eur.
- ✓ for the STARS-StG category, in the event that the PI's employment relationship changes during the project, provided compatibility with the project's execution is maintained, the project will continue, but any remaining funds allocated for the PI's costs (CPI) will be recovered to the University's budget;
- ✓ for the STARS-CoG and STARS-WiC categories, the funding will be made available to the PI's hosting Department and will be usable for 30 months.

The contribution for research costs (RC) will cover expenses for non-permanent personnel recruited for the project, equipment, travel, consumables, publications, and other costs necessary for the implementation of the project. Expenses incurred outside the project period will not be considered eligible.

During the project, any reallocations of the approved budget must be pre-authorized by the STARS@Unipd Internal Commission.

Art. 8 – DUTIES OF PIs OF FUNDED PROJECTS

PIs are required to carry out the activities outlined in the research project they submitted and for which they have been funded.

PIs who, during the course of the project, accept a position or funding at another university or research institute must relinquish the STARS funding and their role as PI.

Within 30 days from the end of the first year and the second year, and the end of the project, the PI must submit a scientific report (*Intermediate* and *Final*, respectively) describing the implementation of the project, the results obtained, any changes to the original proposal. The scientific report, together with the approval of the Board of the hosting Department, must be sent to Unipd. The ex-post evaluation methods of the results achieved at the end of the project activities will be defined by the University's Scientific Committee.

Research results must be published according to the "Open Access Regulation for the scientific production of the University of Padua" and, for the purpose of ex post verification, in publications resulting from research funded under this call, PIs should quote (in order of priority) the STARS@UNIPD programme, the acronym and the title of the project.



The PI commits to submitting, at the first eligible call before the end of the STARS action, a project proposal to an ERC-StG, ERC-CoG, or ERC-Adv call, designating the University of Padua (Unipd) as the Host Institution, or to another programme with similar characteristics to the ERC, such as:

- A selection process based on the researcher's curriculum and career development;
- Contracting through a Host Institution that receives the funding for the PI's contract and research activities;
- Evaluation processes similar to those of the ERC, involving independent, open, transparent selection procedures based on merit, with scientific committees composed of highly qualified experts.

A non-exhaustive list of the programmes mentioned above is provided for informational purposes in Annex 2.

Art. 9 – ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The proposed research and innovation activities must comply with ethical and legal principles at the national, international, and European Union levels, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights and its additional protocols. Particular attention must be given to the principle of proportionality, the right to privacy, the right to protection of personal data, the right to physical and mental integrity, the right to non-discrimination, and the need to ensure high levels of protection for human health. The proposed research and innovation activities must focus exclusively on civil applications.

Art. 10 – FINAL PROVISIONS

For matters not specified in this call, reference is made to the provisions contained in Law No. 240/2010 and subsequent amendments, along with the relevant implementing regulations, including those internal to the University of Padua, to the Regulation for the award of research fellowships at the University of Padua (<https://www.unipd.it/assegni-ricerca>), and, in any case, to the applicable legislation.

The University reserves the right to verify a candidate's self-certifications and statutory declarations (provided in accordance with the Italian Presidential Decree DPR 445/2000) at any stage of the procedure. If the above-mentioned check reveals the falsehood of the content of the declarations, the declarer will forfeit any benefits that may result from the decision issued based on the untruthful declaration, without prejudice to the provisions of Article 76 of the Presidential Decree no. 445/2000, regarding the penalties provided for by the penal code and special laws on the matter.

Personal data provided by candidates shall be processed according to the EU Regulation no. 679/2016 (*General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR*).

The personal data of the applicants will be processed electronically for the purposes of this procedure and for the eventual establishment of the employment relationship. Providing and collecting the data is mandatory for participation in the selection process, and, where it concerns sensitive data, it will be done in accordance with Law No. 68/1999 and Law No. 104/1992. The complete information on the processing of personal data is available at the following links: <http://www.unipd.it/privacy> (in Italian) and <http://www.unipd.it/en/privacy> (in English).

The person in charge of this procedure is Mr. Andrea Berti, Head of the Research and Business Relations Area (ARRI) of the University of Padua.



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This call for proposals is managed by the International Research Office of the University of Padua: questions and information requests about the proposal submission or the evaluation procedures may be addressed to talent.stars@unipd.it.

All relevant documents for this call for proposals are available at the following links: <http://www.unipd.it/stars2025> (in Italian) and <http://www.unipd.it/en/stars2025> (in English).

The English version of this call for proposals has the sole purpose of enabling applicants to understand the content thereof; only the Italian version of the call is legally binding.

Padua, date of signature.

The Rector
Daniela Mapelli

Annexes:

1. Macro-areas and ERC scientific domains;
2. Guide for Applicants and application template.



Annex 1: ERC Macroareas and scientific areas

<p>Macroarea PE Physical Sciences and Engineering</p>	<p>Macroarea LS Life Sciences</p>	<p>Macroarea SH Social Sciences and Humanities</p>
<p>PE1 Mathematics: All areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics, and statistics.</p> <p>PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter: Particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics.</p> <p>PE3 Condensed Matter Physics: Structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences, biological physics.</p> <p>PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences: Analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics.</p> <p>PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials: New materials and new synthetic approaches, structure-properties relations, solid state chemistry, molecular architecture, organic chemistry.</p> <p>PE6 Computer Science and Informatics: Theoretical and experimental computer science, information processing, intelligent systems.</p> <p>PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering: Electrical, electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering.</p> <p>PE8 Products and Processes Engineering: Product and process design, chemical, civil, environmental, mechanical, vehicle engineering, energy processes and relevant computational methods.</p> <p>PE9 Universe Sciences: Astro-physics/-chemistry/-biology; solar system; planetary systems; stellar, galactic and extragalactic</p>	<p>LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structure and Functions: <i>For all organisms:</i> Molecular biology, biochemistry, structural biology, molecular biophysics, synthetic and chemical biology, drug design, innovative methods and modelling.</p> <p>LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems: <i>For all organisms:</i> Genetics, epigenetics, genomics and other ‘omics studies, bioinformatics, systems biology, genetic diseases, gene editing, innovative methods and modelling, ‘omics for personalised medicine.</p> <p>LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration: <i>For all organisms:</i> Structure and function of the cell, cell-cell communication, embryogenesis, tissue differentiation, organogenesis, growth, development, evolution of development, organoids, stem cells, regeneration, therapeutic approaches.</p> <p>LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing: Organ and tissue physiology, comparative physiology, physiology of ageing, pathophysiology, inter-organ and tissue communication, endocrinology, nutrition, metabolism, interaction with the microbiome, non-communicable diseases including cancer (and except disorders of the nervous system and immunity-related diseases).</p> <p>LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System: Nervous system development, homeostasis</p>	<p>SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations: Economics, finance and management</p> <p>SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems: Political science, international relations, law.</p> <p>SH3 The Social World and its Interactions: Sociology, social psychology, education sciences, communication studies.</p> <p>SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity: Cognitive science, psychology, linguistics.</p> <p>SH5 Texts and Concepts: Literary studies, literature, philosophy.</p> <p>SH6 The Study of the Human Past: Archaeology and history.</p> <p>SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space: Human geography, demography, health, sustainability science, territorial planning, spatial analysis.</p> <p>SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts: Social anthropology, studies of cultures, studies of arts.</p>



<p style="text-align: center;">Macroarea PE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Physical Sciences and Engineering</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Macroarea LS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Life Sciences</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Macroarea SH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Social Sciences and Humanities</p>
<p>astronomy; cosmology; space sciences; astronomical instrumentation and data.</p> <p>PE10 Earth System Science: Physical geography, geology, geophysics, atmospheric sciences, oceanography, climatology, cryology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management.</p> <p>PE11 Materials Engineering: Advanced materials development: performance enhancement, modelling, large-scale preparation, modification, tailoring, optimisation, novel and combined use of materials, etc.</p>	<p>and ageing, nervous system function and dysfunction, systems neuroscience and modelling, biological basis of cognitive processes and of behaviour, neurological and mental disorders. – <i>In humans and all other organisms.</i></p> <p>LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy: The immune system, related disorders and their mechanisms, biology of infectious agents and infection, biological basis of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, innovative immunological tools and approaches, including therapies.</p> <p>LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases: Medical technologies and tools for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases, therapeutic approaches and interventions, pharmacology, preventative medicine, epidemiology and public health, digital medicine.</p> <p>LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution: <i>For all organisms:</i> Ecology, biodiversity, environmental change, evolutionary biology, behavioural ecology, microbial ecology, marine biology, ecophysiology, theoretical developments and modelling.</p> <p>LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering: Biotechnology using all organisms, biotechnology for environment and food applications, applied plant and animal sciences, bioengineering and synthetic biology, biomass and biofuels, biohazards.</p>	