

# THE ICELANDIC RESEARCH FUND FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Rules and guidelines for the grant year 2012

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## **Foreword by the Chair of the Board of the Icelandic Research Fund for Graduate Students**

The Icelandic Research Fund for Graduate Students (IRFGS) awards grants to support students in research related graduate studies that meet the National Qualification Framework for Iceland issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and the provisions of the Higher Education Act, no. 63/2006. The fund operates according to Rules no. 16/2008, issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture,

Grantees are obliged to submit an annual report on the progress of their projects after the first and second year of the project and to submit a final report no later than twelve months from the conclusion of their project. The supervisor is responsible for the grantee's submission of annual and final reports which is a requirement for future eligibility for grants from the Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannís).

Grants are awarded for support of PhD students up to three years and Master's students for up to four months. The amount granted to a PhD student is 280.000 ISK per month and to a Master's student 220.000 ISK per month. The IRFGS pays the grant directly to the bank account of the student's institution or company.

External evaluators assess the academic value of the research project, the student's achievement in his/her studies and research, as well as the efficacy of the supervisor. If the studies are pursued at a foreign university, the research project shall pertain to an Icelandic subject matter, and an academic with working facilities in Iceland shall take an active part in instructing the student. The contribution of the Icelandic instructor shall be considerable and well defined.

CI (Company and Institution) grants are also offered, the objective of which is to strengthen co-operation between institutions, companies and universities.

**Professor Sigurður Magnús Garðarsson**  
**Chair of the Board of the Icelandic Research Fund for Graduate Students**

## **1. The Board of the IRFGS**

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture appoints a three-member board for the IRFGS for a period of three years at a time. The board is composed of a representative nominated by the Joint Committee of the University Level, a representative nominated by the Scientific Committee of the Science and Technology Board, and a representative, who shall be the Chair of the Board, appointed by the Minister. In 2012 the board consists of the following individuals:

Professor Sigurður Magnús Garðarsson, University of Iceland (Chairman)  
Professor Ingibjörg Harðardóttir, University of Iceland  
Dr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, Reykjavík Academy

As stipulated in the Act for Public Support for Scientific Research, no. 3/2003, Art. 8, the board of the fund shall issue rules on allocation no later than six weeks prior to the publicised deadline for proposals.

## **2. Types of grants and calls for proposals**

The IRFGS awards two types of grants, General grants and Company and Institution (CI) grants. The next deadline for proposals for both grants is 15 March 2012.

The application form is available on the web page of The Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannís): <http://www.rannis.is/sjodir/rannsoknarnamssjodur>.

## **3. Eligibility rules**

The objective of the IRFGS is to award grants to research related graduate studies at university level in Iceland or abroad. Grants can be financed in cooperation with research institutes or companies. If the studies are pursued at a foreign university, the research project shall have some relevance to Iceland, and an academic with working facilities in Iceland shall take an active part in instructing the applicant. The contribution of the Icelandic instructor shall be least 25% of the instruction. The applicant must be admitted to research related graduate studies in order to be eligible for a grant and the confirmation from the school in question shall arrive not later than June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Candidates for Doctoral degree may apply for a grant for up to three years, while Master's students may apply for grants for up to four months. The research part of the Master's study shall involve at least 60 ECTS, whereof a final research project (thesis/dissertation) shall be at least 40 ECTS.

## **4. General grants**

Grants are awarded to support students in research related graduate studies that meet the *National Qualification Framework for Iceland* issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and in other respects meet the provisions of the Higher Education Act, no. 63/2006, the rules of individual departments and the general rules of higher education institutions.

If the student is pursuing studies at a foreign university, a detailed evaluation report on the course of study at the university in question shall be available. The application shall be accompanied by an agreement between the institution and a supervisor working in Iceland on the study arrangement, outlining the contribution of the institution or department, the facilities for the student, and the nature of the contribution of the supervisor with research facilities in Iceland during the period of the studies (cf. also Section 4 on Eligibility Rules).

The student shall be obliged to pursue his/her research-related studies as a full-time position during the period of support by the IRFGS, not taking part in any other work during the grant period. However, the student shall be authorized to participate in teaching, providing that the teaching does not amount to more than 20% of a full-time position.

### **Grant amounts and allocation of general grants**

The amount of grants to candidates for a doctorate is 280.000 ISK per month for up to three years, a total of up to 10.080.000 ISK. The amount granted for master's students is 220.000 ISK per month for up to four months, a total of up to 880.000 ISK. The Board of the IRFGS decides annually the amount of the grants. The student is considered to be a grantee, the grant to be used exclusively for upkeep. A grant is awarded on the basis of information provided in the statement accompanying the application. The payments are made under an agreement with Rannís and will usually start September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **5. The evaluation process of new applications**

The board of the IRFGS seeks external assessment on the academic value of projects, the plan of implementation and funding and the academic competence of the supervisor, from two independent specialists before awarding the grants. Board members offer their opinion of the project which is taken into consideration in the evaluation of the applications.

For an application to be considered eligible the academic value of the proposed research will have to be indisputable and the applicant's project needs to be connected to the field of expertise of the supervisors. The project is to be professionally well-defined. Furthermore, the curriculum and the project time schedule have to be clear.

In the assessment of the applications, the following factors are taken into consideration:

1. The academic value of the proposed research project and the presentation of the project in the proposal.
2. The applicant's academic achievement.
3. The research efficacy of the supervisor(s).
4. The connection between the research project and the supervisors' field of expertise.

### **Evaluation criteria**

The following conditions are used as a basis for the evaluation of the applications (please note the different weight of the conditions):

1. *The academic value of the project* (40%). The project receives a positive evaluation and the applicant's academic contribution is indisputable.
2. *The student's academic achievement* (30%). The student has shown good performance in his/her studies. Furthermore, the student has showed considerable research capability, first and foremost by publishing in a recognized venue.
3. *The productivity of the supervisor* (30%). The supervisor has shown good productivity in research in the opinion of professional bodies and meets the conditions in a, b and c:
  - a) Has published, on average, 1 to 1.5 peer-reviewed articles per year during the past years, or at least 15 peer-reviewed articles from the start of his or her research career, or has shown comparable efficacy in the case of book publications (different between academic fields).
  - b) The supervisor has supervised at least two master's students and/or one doctoral student during the past 5 years.
  - c) The supervisor has published a peer-reviewed article or articles in cooperation with students during recent years (may not apply to various fields of humanities and social sciences).

An application is ineligible if one of the following is the case:

1. The project has considerable shortcomings.
2. The applicant has not convincingly shown good academic achievement.
3. The supervisor has insufficient instruction experience (does not apply to recently employed supervisors).
4. The supervisors' research productivity is limited.
5. The project is outside the supervisors' field of expertise.
6. The application is unsatisfactory or incomplete.

### **Grants processing**

1. Attempts will be made to finish the allocation process within four months from the application deadline.
2. Applications received after the application deadline will not be processed. No information in personal conversations or letters will be accepted after the application deadline.
3. The applicants shall be obliged to present unequivocal and detailed answers to all items in the application form.

4. The students are only awarded grants during the time they are working actively on their research projects.
5. Payments are based on a written contract. The IRFGS pays the grant directly to the bank account of the company or institution.

## **6. Progress reports and other information on research projects**

Grants are awarded with the provision of satisfactory progress of the projects and appropriations to the fund. The IRFGS makes an initial agreement with the grantee within four months from the allocation. The board of the fund shall be notified of altered circumstances for the grantee during the grant period, especially if the applicant drops out of his/her studies, the supervisor(s) change positions, or other changes are made in the conditions and facilities for the implementation of the research project.

### **Annual report (applies only to PhD students)**

By September 15<sup>th</sup> the grantees are obliged to submit an annual report on the progress of the project during the last twelve months. The annual reports are appraised by Rannís employees who make proposals to the board of the fund on continued grants. The board of the IRFGS and Rannís employees can request further information from the student while evaluating the annual reports. The supervisor is responsible for the grantee's submission of an annual report.

### **Final report**

The final report shall be submitted not later than twelve months from the conclusion of the grant. The supervisor is responsible for the grantee's submission of a final report which is a requirement for future eligibility for grants from Rannís. Projects funded by the IRFGS are not considered completed until a final report has been submitted. The final grant payment to the doctorate will be issued once the report has been approved.

The annual report and the final report shall be submitted to the fund on specific forms available on the home page of The Icelandic Centre for Research:

<http://rannis.is/sjodir/rannsoknarnamssjodur/umsokn-og-upplysingar/>

## **7. Various provisions regarding grantees**

The conclusions of the projects should be published in peer-reviewed international journals or in a venue subject to comparable standards, unless another agreement has been made. Furthermore, the fund considers it desirable that the student presents the project at a conference or in a newspaper or a magazine article.

In all writings of conclusions of academic research subsidized by the fund, the grantees shall mention its participation in funding the work in question, that is, "The Icelandic Research Fund for Graduate Students" (In Icelandic: Rannsóknarnámssjóður) and the relevant grant number.

*The grantees shall carry out their research according to current laws and general rules and acquire all the necessary authorizations as applicable.*

## **8. Company and institution grants (CI grants)**

The objective of CI grants is to strengthen cooperation between institutions, companies and universities. The grants are formed by the joint financing of a company/institution and the IRFGS. The arrangement of the studies shall meet the National Qualification Framework for Iceland issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and, in other respects, meet the provisions of the Higher Education Act, no. 63/2006, the rules of individual departments and the general rules of higher education institutions.

### **Grant amounts and allocation of CI grants**

CI grants are awarded up to two years for doctoral students and for up to four months for master's students, with IRFGS and the company/institution in question providing equal funding. Written confirmation from the company/institution must accompany the application. A doctoral student may receive from the IRFGS maintenance for up to 12 months (3.360.000 ISK) and a master's student maintenance for up to two months (440.000 ISK). Grant payments can be calculated from the day when the application is submitted, providing the work on the project has already started.

### **The advantage of CI grants**

- Icelandic companies and institutions can safely and economically build up internal knowledge and thus improve their position.
- The interests of graduate students are immediately directed towards projects which may be expected to be of use to them in their future jobs, and thus be useful for Icelandic industry.
- The universities guarantee that the studies and the research projects conform to international standards.
- The research of universities will be strengthened and underpinned in co-operation with companies and institutions.

### **Implementation of CI grants**

The process of CI grants is as follows:

- The initiative for an application may originate from a company/institution or the student and supervisor. The IRFGS emphasises the initiative of students and supervisors in contacting a company or an institution outside the university for the purpose of encouraging co-operation within the research field of a doctoral project.
- If companies or institutions wish to announce a grant for a specific project, the IRFGS, along with the companies or institutions in question, can announce CI grants for applications on the Rannís home page. The applicants (student and supervisor) prepare an application in co-operation with the contact of the company/institution.

- When the application is received by the IRFGS it will be appraised in the same manner as other applications.
- The board of the IRFGS recommends the granting or rejection of a grant after appraising the application. See the evaluation criteria in Section 6 (*The evaluation process of new applications*).
- If a grant is awarded, a written agreement on payments is made between the parties in question. The IRFGS pays its part of the grant to the grantee in the same manner as for other grants awarded by the Fund. The part from the company or institution is paid directly to the grantee or with the IRFGS acting as an intermediary.

### **Work procedures for CI grants**

1. CI grants are awarded in co-operation with companies and institutions.
2. On average, 10% of the appropriations made to the IRFGS shall be used for CI grants.