

STARS@UNIPD

Supporting Talent in ReSearch@University of Padua University Programme for individual research – STARS Grants Applications open from 1 December 2022 to 28 February 2023

STARS@UNIPD reaches in 2023 its fourth edition, it is launched by the University of Padua (Unipd, Italy) and aims at funding 30-month individual research projects. It operates on a “bottom-up” basis and applications can be submitted in any field of research. Candidates can submit a proposal in one of the 27 ERC scientific research areas within the three ERC domains - Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE); Life Sciences (LS); Social Sciences and Humanities (SH).

Aims of the programme

The main goal is to increase the participation of the University in international competitive calls, specifically the ERC ones. Successful PIs, once enrolled in the STARS@UNIPD 2023 programme, are committed to submitting an ERC application. Alternatively, they may apply to a different funding programme, as long as it features a structure equivalent to the ERC schemes. Scientific excellence will be the sole criterion for evaluation.

Who can apply?

The call is open to *Principal Investigators* (PIs) of any age and nationality, who wish to pursue research in one of the 32 Departments of the University of Padua and who are able to demonstrate the innovative nature, the ambition and the feasibility of their proposed research.

This call for proposals includes the following types of grant:

- **STARS Starting Grants (STARS-StGs):** designed to fund PIs with an excellent track record, also external to Unipd, who have defended their first Doctoral degree within a maximum of 5 years prior to 1 January 2023.
- **STARS Consolidator Grants (STARS-CoGs):** designed to fund PIs with an excellent track record, who are already conducting research at Unipd and are consolidating their own research team and/or their own independent research who have defended their first Doctoral degree within a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 years prior to 1 January 2023.
- **STARS Wild Card Grants (STARS-WiCs):** designed to fund PIs who submitted a proposal in the ERC *Starting* or *Consolidator* or *Advanced* Grant, 2021 and 2022 calls for proposals, indicated Unipd as *Host Institution*, obtained a final mark of “A” but was not funded due to budget limits.

Evaluation criteria

The selection process is inspired by the ERC and the eligibility check of all applications will be followed by two different evaluation steps for the STARS-StG and STARS-CoG grants:

Step 1 - Evaluation of Part B1 of the research proposal (extended synopsis, the PI’s CV and track record – max. 10 pages). Each proposal will be reviewed by the member of the Macro-area sub-committee who is expert in the specific scientific area.

Step 2 - Evaluation of Part B2 of the proposal (Research proposal – max. 15 pages) + Interview (approximately 30 minutes) for all candidates that are admitted to Step 2.

International Research Office – Individual grants Unit

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STARS-WiC proposals will be evaluated only for Part B2 - *Research Proposal*.

The **Evaluation Committee** comprises a maximum of 27 external experts of recognized international prestige, selected among the panel members of the competitive European projects funded by the ERC, who will be assigned to 3 sub-committees matching the three ERC Domains: PE (max. 11 experts); LS (max. 9 experts); SH (max. 7 experts). Three Chairs will be appointed by the Unipd Rector. Sub-committees will employ independent anonymous reviewers who are expert in the scientific areas of the projects admitted to the peer-review process (Step 2).

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

Opening of the call for proposals	1 December 2022
Deadline for proposal submission	28 February 2023 hrs 1 p.m.
Eligibility check	22 March 2023
Pre-selection (Step 1 for StG and CoG) and evaluation (single step for WiC)	30 June 2023
Evaluation of proposals (Step 2)	29 September 2023
Interview	October 2023
Evaluation results	15 November 2023
Approval of the ranking list of projects selected for funding	30 November 2023
Project starting date	1 January 2024
Latest deadline for the signature of StG or CoG research grant contract ("assegno di ricerca")	31 March 2024

Budget

The budget of STARS projects comprises an amount covering **research costs**, which depends on the scientific domain of the proposal (amount for 30 months max.: 100.000€ for SH; 175.000€ for PE/LS¹). For STARS-StGs and STARS-CoGs, the budget also features an amount covering a **research grant contract for the recruitment of the PI²** (max. 40.000€ gross per year), when they do not hold a permanent position at Unipd. **Mobility allowance (MA)**, may be added to the salary of the STARS-StG PIs in case they move to Italy from abroad (max. 15.000€ for 30 months).

How and when to apply

- **Save the date** - STARS GRANTS 2023 call for proposals opens on 1 December 2022 and closes on 28 February 2023, hrs 1 p.m. (Italy time zone).
- **Electronic submission system** - Candidates must exclusively follow the on line procedure available at this link: <https://pica.cineca.it/unipd/>. They must first register to the application platform.
- **Application package** – The call for proposals, its attachments, the submission procedure, and any document relevant to the submission process will be available on the web page dedicated to the programme: <https://www.unipd.it/stars2023> (In Italian) and <https://www.unipd.it/en/stars2023> (in English).

¹ Pursuant to article 3 of the STARS@UNIPD call for proposals: amounts cover research costs in projects with no grant for the PI.

² Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, letter b) of Unipd regulation on research grant contracts, PIs will be recruited through as Assegno di ricerca di tipo b). See also *Art. 7 - Allocation of funding* of the STARS@UNIPD call for proposals.