

Supporting Talent in ReSearch@University of Padua – STARS@UNIPD University Programme STARS Grants for individual research

The STARS Grants call for proposals, reaching in 2021 its third edition, is launched by the University of Padua and aims at funding two-year individual research projects. The funding operates on a “bottom-up” basis and applications can be submitted in any field of research. Candidates can propose a project in one of the 27 scientific research areas, which Unipd grouped in three Macro-areas corresponding to the three ERC research domains (PE: Physical Sciences and Engineering; LS: Life Sciences; SH: Social Sciences and Humanities).

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 2021 programme, are committed to submitting an ERC application. Scientific excellence will be the sole criterion to evaluate proposals.

Who can apply?

The call for proposals 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 the 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 been awarded their first Doctoral degree within a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7 years prior to 1 January 2021.
- **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 been awarded their first Doctoral degree within a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 12 years prior to 1 January 2021.
- **STARS Wild Card Grants (STARS-WiCs):** designed to fund PIs who submitted a proposal in the ERC *Starting* or *Consolidator* or *Advanced* Grant, 2019 and 2020 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) only for STARS-StG and STARS-CoG candidates. 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.

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

The **Evaluation Committee** is composed by 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 - Physical Sciences and Engineering (max. 11 experts); LS - Life Sciences (max. 9 experts); SH - Social Sciences and Humanities (max. 7 experts). Three commission 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	11 January 2021
Deadline for proposal submission	12 April 2021 hrs 1 p.m.
Eligibility check	30 April 2021
Pre-selection (Step 1 for StG and CoG) and evaluation (single step for WiC)	30 June 2021
Evaluation of proposals (Step 2)	30 September 2021
Interview	October 2021
Evaluation results	15 November 2021
Approval of the ranking list of projects selected for funding	30 November 2021
Project starting date	1 January 2022
Latest deadline for the signature of STG or COG research grant contract ("assegno di ricerca")	31 March 2022

Budget

The budget of STARS projects comprises an amount covering **research costs**, which depends on the scientific domain of the proposal (amount for two years max.: 80.000€ for SH; 140.000€ for PE/LS¹). For STARS-StGs and STARS-CoGs, the budget also features an amount covering a **research grant contract**, type B² (max. 40.000€ per year), to be foreseen when the PI does not hold a permanent position at Unipd.

How and when to apply

- **Save the date** - STARS GRANTS 2021 call for proposals will be open from 11 January 2021 to 12 April 2021, 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/stars2021> (In Italian) and <https://www.unipd.it/en/stars2021> (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. See also Art. 7 - Allocation of funding of the STARS@UNIPD call for proposals.