Explanatory memorandum to the Rules for the Management and Use of the Grant Fund, Teaching Development Fund, Real Estate Fund, IT Development Fund and the Fund for the Implementation Plan of the Strategic Plan

1. Grant fund – a research grant for young scientists

Objective

The grant fund is established based on the Strategic Plan of Tallinn University of Technology and its implementation plan. The grant fund is established to fulfil the goals set in the Strategic Plan: to support young scientists and help them gain independence and ensure their rapid development, to increase the university's competitive research funding and to develop the university's internal funding model. To carry out the action, the project "Creating and launching a grant fund" has been initiated under the implementation plan of the Strategic Plan.

The aim of the research grant is:

1. to mitigate the risks of young scientists who are in the most insecure phase of their academic career and to provide them greater stability and support in carrying out high-quality research and in gaining independence, regardless of temporary setbacks in applying for research funding from highly competitive sources requiring high quality;
2. to strengthen career security and contribute to the development of a new generation of researchers by building a bridge to the next academic career options (e.g. tenure, a researcher's career in a research group);
3. to improve the competitiveness of young scientists - to support their motivation and ambition and improve their skills in order to cope in the competition-based funding system.

Awarding the grant

The research grant for young scientists is awarded based on applications for high-quality research and development projects submitted to external funders that have received very high evaluation scores (have passed the threshold) but have not received funding. Only accurately and timely registered applications (in compliance with the Rules for Project Administration) and their evaluation scores are taken into account upon awarding the grant. When an application is registered, the Research Administration Office verifies its eligibility for the research grant for young scientists and makes a corresponding note in the document management system. The Research Administration Office monitors the funding decisions made regarding the applications and if an application does not receive funding, but its evaluation scores are above the threshold (if a threshold has been established by the funder) or very high, a proposal will be made to award a grant to the young researcher who is the principal investigator indicated in the application. The young researcher can accept or decline the grant. It is assumed that the young researcher makes a well-considered decision on whether the grant is necessary to achieve the objective of the action and whether there is real need for and the capability to use the grant. If the young researcher is involved in another funded project or has received funding for his/her other

application in the period between the submission of the application on the basis of which the grant is awarded and the award of the grant and he/she does not need additional funding and does not have the capability to carry out additional activities, it is justified to decline the grant offered. Furthermore, due to the same time lag, it can happen that a researcher has applied for or is applying for the development grant allocated from the grant fund that is not awarded simultaneously with the research grant for young scientists. When accepting the grant, a young researcher is expected to behave responsibly and to adequately assess his or her needs and possibilities.

Eligibility

The research grant for young scientists is intended for young researchers holding a PhD who are still on their path to becoming independent researchers. Therefore, it is not intended for those who have already become independent and have taken up a tenured position. For the purposes of this measure, "a young scientist" means a person who has obtained a PhD degree less than 10 years ago, excluding compulsory military service and parental leave.
The research grant is intended for young researchers, taking into account that experienced researchers have advanced to professorship or are continuing their career in strong research groups rallied around tenured professors.
In order to support independence, it is important that in the application based on which eligibility is determined, the young researcher has assumed, besides formal responsibility, also substantive responsibility as the principal investigator and is ready to lead the project if funding is received.
In order to support the ambition of young researchers, the minimum amount applied for Tallinn University of Technology by the application on the basis of which eligibility is determined is 80,000 euros.
Examples of funding measures based on which the research grant is awarded: Estonian Research Council research grants: a staring grant, a team grant, Estonian Research Council proof-of-concept grant, applicants who have passed the threshold or reached the second round in an EU framework programme, Nordforsk, EEA, Interreg, etc., the measures planned for boosting R&D in the new EU structural funds (SF) period.

Using the grant

The grant shall be used, both in form and in substance, in compliance with the intention of the grant fund and the university's and external regulations. Utilization of the funds must ensure that new, high-quality, competitive applications are submitted.

A research grant recipient shall undergo counselling organised by the Research Administration Office, which includes, among other things, a personalized funding opportunities search service provided by the team of advisers and support for writing high-potential applications.

Reporting

Reporting is not expected from the grant recipient, but the Research Administration Office monitors the use of the grant during the prescribed period and whether the grant recipient has received grant counselling and has submitted (a) new application(s), where he/she is the principal investigator, within 18 months. The monitoring results will be used to make management decisions on the measure and to assess the need for change, as well as to measure the impact of the measure. If, as a result of monitoring, there is a

reasonable suspicion that the grant is not used in accordance with the objectives of the grant, the Vice-Rector for Research has the right, after considering the circumstances, to decide to suspend or cancel the grant. The names of the grant recipients will be published on the internal communication channels.

2. The grant fund – a development grant

The new Regulation reduces the time required for applying and simplifies the process.
Instead of two separate types of grants, there is now a single grant: the development grant.
An important change is the ongoing step-by-step funding application process in contrast to the previous practice, where the vast majority of the funds were allocated to only three projects and there was not enough funding available for other projects.
In contrast to previous practices, the evaluation now includes assessing the technological advantage over alternative technologies, the commercial potential, the commercialization opportunities, as well as the appropriateness of the amount, schedule, and purpose of the desired funding.
Previously, a separate financing source was created for each project. Under the current practice, when the Vice-Rector for Research decides to award a development grant, the development grant shall be allocated as a lump sum payment to the financing source created for that purpose or paid based on the submitted invoices.

3. Teaching development fund

Explanatory memorandum of the TEACHING DEVELOPMENT FUND for 2024
The amendments to the directive have been made in response to the need to modify the strategic areas and the grant amounts drawing from the experience of the two previous years.
The teaching development fund for 2024 is allocated as follows:

Discussions regarding the strategic areas for the calls for proposals for the teaching development fund of 2024 took place at the meetings of the Committee for Academic Affairs held on 7 November 2023 and 5 December 2023. As a result, the following strategic areas for the calls for proposals were agreed, the conditions for the submission of applications and award of grants, and the amounts of the grants by sub-fund were agreed:

3.1. THE FUND FOR THE TEACHING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF THE SCHOOLS

Volume of the fund: €350,000
Terms and conditions and supported actions:
- The School can submit a project proposal either:
  1) for updating concrete study programmes, or
  2) for developing the education infrastructure.
- For the purposes of the call for proposals, "**updating of study programmes**" means developing study programmes that are coherent, evidence-based and learning-oriented and incorporate general competencies.
  To be more specific:

- o Developing study programmes to incorporate general competencies – incorporating general competencies into speciality subjects and their application in studies.
- o Integrating subjects and ensuring constructive coherence, including the development and co-teaching of substantial modules (at least 6 ECTS credit points) For example, preparation of assessment tasks or projects covering various subjects. Supported actions include development activities supporting the reinforcement of study programme teams (seminars, trainings, workshops, co-creation, etc.) that contribute to updating of study programmes and teaching.
- The School and the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs shall agree on the performance goals for the activities requiring a boost.
  - o Grants from the fund cannot be used to support research (excluding proof-of-concept studies) or compiling textbooks. Also, actions/study programmes funded from other sources (the Academy of Engineering and other measures) are not eligible for support.

Grant amount: the amount of the grant allocated to a School is determined based on the limit depending on the workload of teaching.

School	Share of workload	Grant amount (€)
School of Engineering	34.02%	119,078.61
School of Information Technologies	26.11%	91,373.05
School of Science (incl. the National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics)	9.76%	34,143.61
School of Business and Governance	23.16%	81,047.22
Estonian Maritime Academy	6.96%	24,357.51
TOTAL	**100%**	**350,000.00**

3.2. THE FUND FOR PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIELD OF STUDY
Volume of the fund: € 130,000 (€ 120,000 in 2023)
Strategic areas in 2024:
1) Incorporating problem- and project-based learning into study programmes and courses
Grant amount: up to € 15,000
Sub-grant amount: € 90,000 (6 grants)
Terms and conditions: no changes

2) Involving study assistants
Grant amount: up to € 1,250/semester
Sub-grant amount: € 40,000 (32 grants)
Terms and conditions: Involving students (master's and doctoral students) as study assistants.
Condition: Study assistant support can be applied for courses with the workload of at least 6 ECTS credits.
A School can submit applications in the prescribed limit , plus one application in reserve, which will be satisfied if there are funds available.
Limits according to the share of the School's workload of teaching:

School	Share of workload	Grant amount (€)	Number of grants

School of Engineering	34.02%	13,608	11
School of Information Technologies	26.11%	10,444	8
School of Science (incl. the National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics)	9.76%	3,904	3
School of Business and Governance	23.16%	9,264	7
Estonian Maritime Academy	6.96%	2,784	2
TOTAL	**100%**	**40,000**	**32**

3.3. THE FUND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY ACTIVITIES OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF
Volume of the fund: € 30,000 (€ 40,000 last year)

- For improvement of teaching skills or development of studies
€ 30,000 ,up to € 2,500 each
Programme directors who are not members of the academic staff are also eligible to apply now.

SCHEDULE OF APPLICATION ROUNDS FOR 2024

Application round	The application round is open	Evaluation schedule
The development of a field of study - **Problem- and project-based learning** - **Study assistants**	2 January - 22 January	02.01– opening of the application round 21.01 – application deadline 22.-24.01 – preliminary evaluation (Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs) 25.01 – materials to be submitted to the Committee for Academic Affairs 02.02 – evaluations of the members of the Committee for Academic Affairs 06.02 – meeting of the Committee for Academic Affairs 13.02 – the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs approves the decisions.
A grant for promoting the development of study activities of the academic staff - **A grant for the development of studies or self-improvement**	From 2 January until funds are exhausted.	The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs assesses on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the Office of Academic Affairs and approves the decisions.

Teaching development projects of the Schools	15 February – 7 April	15.02– opening of the application round 07.04 – application deadline (the Schools present their ideas) …04 – the Committee for Academic Affairs reviews the presented ideas 08.-12.04 – preliminary evaluation , negotiations with the Schools (Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs) 22.04 – the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs approves the decisions.

4. Real estate fund

Objective

The real estate fund provides financing for the preservation and improvement of the buildings, structures and real estate owned by Tallinn University of Technology and for the achievement of climate neutrality. The real estate fund brings benefits to all the members of the university as it ensures the preservation of the value of the real estate belonging to the university and supports the realization of the goals of the core functions of the university. The funding is not allocated based on applications.

Operating model of the real estate fund

Funding decisions are made based on the budgets prepared by the Real Estate Office and the terms of reference for the agreed works and activities. The volume of the real estate fund is decided annually during the budgeting process.

The fund for real estate improvement projects is intended in particular to finance the designing and construction and furnishings of buildings and property, the development of technical and security systems, and the commissioning of audits related to real estate.

To attain the green transition goals, funding is allocated to activities related to the development or management of the university's real estate, as well as guiding environmentally responsible actions by the members of the university at the locations of the university's real estate. Green transition means movement towards a more environmentally friendly and sustainable economic model. The fund is intended in particular to finance actions related to environmentally responsible planning of space and buildings that takes account of biodiversity and ecosystems (green space, health promotion planning), sustainable planning solutions, construction, reconstruction, material selection, environmental engineering, waste management and recycling, environmental impact of infrastructure, living environment quality.

If additional funding is needed to carry out changes related to green transition, additional sources of funding shall be found (by writing projects, applying for EU grants, participating in competitions). Large-scale real estate development

projects are not covered by the real estate fund, decisions regarding these projects are made on an ad hoc basis.

Besides the real estate fund, there is a repair fund collected from structural units. The Real Estate Office uses the repair fund for repair work carried out to preserve the existing condition of the buildings.

5. IT development fund

Objective

The university's Strategic Plan sets a goal to ensure that the university's environments, both physical and virtual, are convenient and sustainable. They shall attract talented employees and facilitate interaction with our former members of the university family, prospective students and entrepreneurs. The university forms a whole regardless of the location of the users. The university's information systems, as a supporting infrastructure, affect all the university's activities. We will continue the activities started under the TalTechDigital initiative, the aim of which is to turn the university into one of the most smartest campuses. The established IT development fund supports the achievement of the goals of the university's Strategic Plan.

A (non-exhaustive) list of the university's main information systems and applications: the study information system (incl. the continuing education information system); MOODLE – an e-learning environment; NAV - business and human resource management software (staff, salaries, finances, assets and projects); the external website; BI - data warehousing and business analysis; PORTAL – the intranet with various applications (annual interviews, the budget, personal data, communication and news, trainings, secondments, expenses, leaves, rooms register, internal bills, content management); the student portal; the support portal (Atlassian - Jira Service Desk).

In addition, smaller funding is required for the following interfaces and small-scale developments: the digital collection, the digital catalogue, ester, e-shop, smaily (newsletters), the TalTech app (the mobile version of the intranet and student portal), oigusaktid.taltech.ee (public legislation), smart.taltech.ee, SoleMOVE (mobility management), SAIS (admission information system) Glowbase (doctoral studies), Estonian Research Information System ETIS, a repository of scientific data, LIS (an access information system), FITEK (e-invoices), PlanPRO (budgeting), AD - Active Directory (user rights management) and pass.taltech.ee (identity management), Atlassian Confluence (IT project documentation) and JIRA (project management software), Office365.

Annex 1 to the Explanatory Memorandum illustrates the IT architecture, i.e. the relationships between different information systems.

Making development proposals

The IT development fund is intended for process managers in the administrative and support units to support the digitalization of business processes that have a wider impact on both academic and non-academic units. The IT development fund is managed in accordance with the agreed IT development process and its implementation. A portal has been created on the university's intranet for making IT development proposals.

6. Fund for the implementation plan of the Strategic Plan

Objective

The objective of the project fund of the implementation plan is to implement the goals set in the Strategic Plan and it is intended in particular to finance actions initiated by the administrative and support units that have an impact also on the academic units. The implementation plan fund supports improvement of the competitiveness (incl. international competitiveness) of the university as a whole through various target groups (incl. employees, entrants, students, employers, entrepreneurs and society at large, foreign partners), in particular in order:

• to improve the quality of research and development and business activities, incl.:

    o to raise the next generation of researchers in strategic and focus areas and areas of responsibility;

    o to launch the sustainable university concept in teaching, research and entrepreneurship as well as in general attitudes and management decisions;

    o to strengthen intersectoral cooperation between the administrative and support units and Schools;

    o to strengthen gender integration and improve personal competitiveness of employees;

    o to contribute to economy in the focus areas of R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship;

• to develop user-centred support processes and services that support the goals of the core activities;

• to improve the quality and transparency of management decisions;

• to develop the capacity of the organisation as a whole;

• to improve the visibility and ratings of the university;

• to design the policies and enhance the strategic capabilities of the university.

The projects to be implemented under the implementation plan and the indicators have been agreed in Rector's directive No 26 "Implementation of the Strategic Plan of Tallinn University of Technology 2021– 2025" (approved on 30.06.2021). Most of the projects to be implemented have been agreed in advance. However, this does not preclude the possibility to start new projects necessary as strategic needs arise or change, to waive an action based on strategic evaluation or due to non-compliance with the eligibility criteria. The latter shall be decided by a committee, i.e. the Rectorate. A table illustrating the management of changes and areas for improvement is annexed to the Explanatory Memorandum (Annex 2).

Eligibility and implementation

The projects of the implementation plan that have been agreed upon are entered into the JIRA environment based on the existing project information collected during the preparation of the implementation plan and the project managers supplement the projects in compliance with the established eligibility criteria. The Strategy Office provides feedback to the project manager on the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria, which is supplemented by the project managers as necessary.

Projects that pass the eligibility criteria are submitted to the committee for evaluation in the order in which the eligibility criteria are met. The committee evaluates up to 20 projects in one round. The committee evaluates the projects

based on the evaluation criteria set out in the Rules (priority, strategic importance, impact and scope, how well the project's preparation and planning has been considered). The Rectorate decides on the funding based on the above. If the committee has additional questions that cannot be answered at the time the decision is taken, further analysis or specification of the project may be requested for the next time the decision is taken. A figure illustrating the committee's evaluation process is annexed to the directive (Annex 3).

The projects in the field of studies agreed in the implementation plan shall be financed and monitored separately in compliance with the corresponding criteria of the teaching development fund.

Annex 1 IT architecture, i.e. the relationships between different information systems
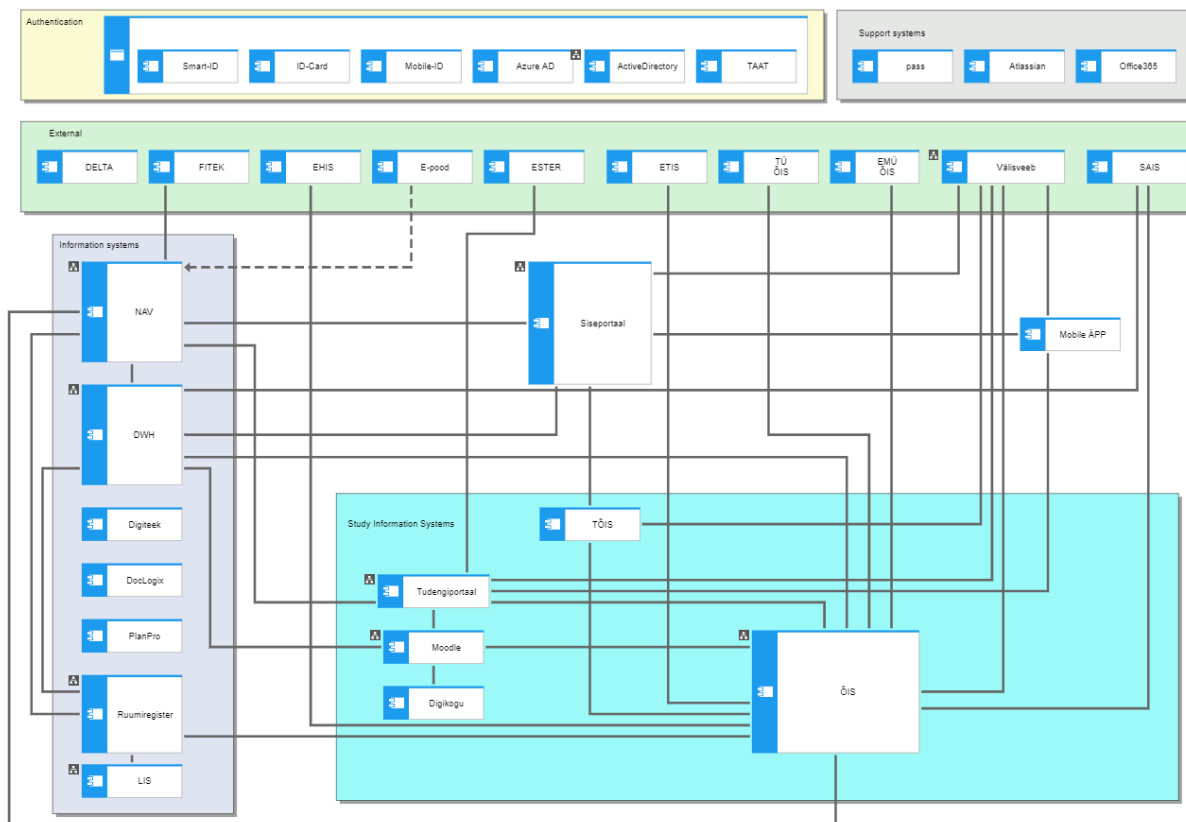
Annex 2: Management of changes and areas for improvement
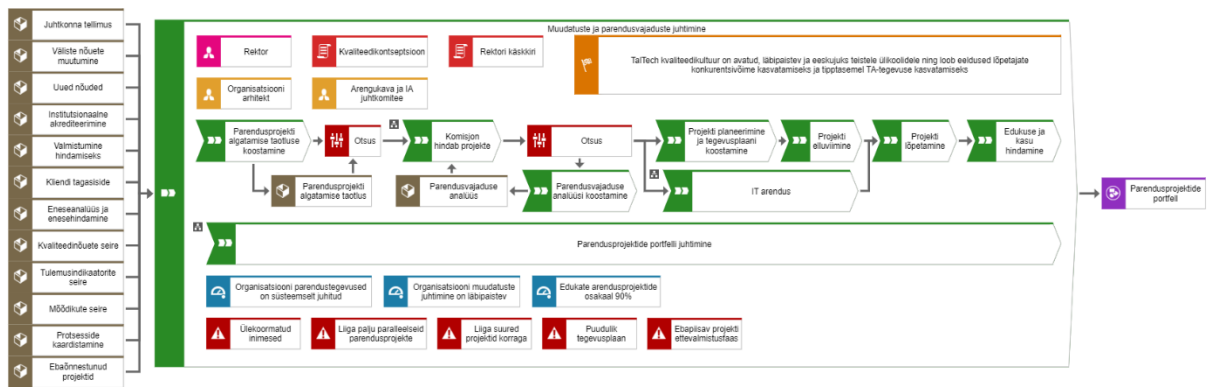
Annex 3: Committee's evaluation process