

Approved by Rector's directive No 19 of 30 April 2026

In force from: 30.04.2026

Procedure for the Funding of Early-Stage Researchers

1. General provisions

1.1 The purpose of the Procedure for the Funding of Early-Stage Researchers is to establish the conditions for funding early-stage researchers matriculated in the 2022/2023 academic year or later, including the minimum gross salary rate, the principles governing the use of state budget and structural unit funds, and project-specific derogations arising from the general conditions of projects, taking into account, inter alia, the objectives and obligations arising from the administrative contract signed between Tallinn University of Technology and the Ministry of Education and Research.

1.2 Early-stage researchers shall be involved in the core activities of the principal supervisor's structural unit or, by agreement, another structural unit, and/or in the research projects of the supervisor(s).

1.3 Early-stage researchers shall be guaranteed a gross salary funded from the state budget (salary fund), supplemented by funding from the structural unit.

1.4 The salary shall be ensured for the entire duration of the early-stage researcher's employment contract, in proportion to the working time agreed in the employment contract.

1.5 The Rectorate shall periodically review the minimum gross salary rate established in the Procedure and the conditions governing the use of the salary fund, having regard to the university's budgetary capacity and changes in the average gross monthly salary in Estonia and, where necessary, the Rector shall establish revised rates and conditions.

2. Minimum gross salary rate for early-stage researchers

2.1 In the case of full-time employment, an early-stage researcher shall be guaranteed a gross monthly salary of at least EUR 2,300.

2.2 In the case of part-time employment, the gross salary shall be calculated in proportion to the working time agreed in the employment contract.

3. Principles for reimbursing labour costs to structural units from the salary fund

3.1 Labour costs of early-stage researchers shall be reimbursed from the salary fund in accordance with the rates established in this Procedure, taking into account the university's strategic objectives, including the development of Estonian-language teaching and research. In projects in which early-stage researchers are involved as research staff and which require co-financing, salary fund resources may be used to cover the co-financing obligation.

3.2 The following amounts shall be reimbursed to the structural unit from the salary fund:

3.2.1 EUR 2,070 per month per early-stage researcher who was matriculated on or before 31 May 2026;

3.2.2 EUR 1,610 per month per early-stage researcher who was matriculated on or after 1 June 2026;

3.2.3 An additional allowance of EUR 345 per month shall be added to the amount specified in clause 3.2.2 where the early-stage researcher's Estonian language proficiency is at least at level B2, enabling participation in Estonian-language academic activities;

3.2.4 the additional allowance specified in clause 3.2.3 shall be applied on the basis of a document certifying language proficiency, as of the calendar month following the submission of the relevant supporting document by the structural unit;

3.2.5 The amounts specified in clauses 3.2.1 –3.2.3 shall be subject to employer taxes and contributions.

3.2.6 The amounts specified in clauses 3.2.1 –3.2.3 shall apply in the case of full-time employment. In the case of part-time employment, the amount shall be reimbursed in proportion to the working time.

3.3 The Estonian language proficiency of the early-stage researcher shall be evidenced by a document certifying language proficiency. The list of documents certifying language proficiency shall be established in the relevant guidelines. Estonian language proficiency shall be deemed to meet the required level if the person has completed basic, secondary, or higher education in Estonian.

3.4 The salary support for an early-stage researcher shall be credited quarterly to the early-stage researcher's salary support funding account of the structural unit specified in the employment contract.

3.5 Labour costs shall not be reimbursed from the salary fund for early-stage researchers whose salaries are funded from projects without a co-financing requirement, and which require the involvement of doctoral candidates for the implementation of project activities.

3.6 The salary fund shall cover the labour costs of an early-stage researcher for the nominal period of study, up to a maximum of 48 months of full-time employment.