



MSCA Seal of Excellence @UNIPD Call 2025

**Deadline for the submission of applications:
30 April 2025 - 1 pm, Italian Time Zone**

PREAMBLE

Through the investment programme called "Talent in Research", the University of Padua (UNIPD) aims at supporting excellent research to be conducted within its premises. In the framework of such programme, UNIPD has been implementing since 2017 the MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD initiative, which is intended to attract young researchers carrying out high quality, innovative and ambitious research at the highest international standards, with the final goal of strengthening the University ability to gain external competitive funding.

The action "MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD" is addressed to researchers of all nationalities, who:

- have submitted a project under the **Horizon Europe 2024 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for proposals (MSCA-PF)**;
- have indicated UNIPD as Beneficiary;
- have been awarded by the European Commission the "Seal of Excellence – MSC Actions"¹, scoring 85% or above but not being funded under the call due to budget restraints.

The University of Padua will award funded researchers a type B² research grant (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*) contract. UNIPD will reserve the right, at its sole discretion, to replace the type B research grant (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*) contract with another contract type, economically equivalent, which should be made available by amendments introduced to Law no. 240/2010.

The requirements for the participation of the PIs eligible for funding will be verified at the time of the project start, in accordance with the reference legislation that will be eventually applicable.

Article 1 - OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME

The "MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD" aims at supporting projects submitted by researchers who have received the "Seal of Excellence – MSC Actions" in the **Horizon Europe 2024 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for proposals** and possess the eligibility requirements listed in Article 2 of this call.

For every year of activity, including the placement period(s) (if applicable), as specified in the MSCA-PF project submitted for funding, a financial contribution is foreseen for a maximum of 36 months, as detailed hereby:

1. 40,000.00 Euros/year (gross amount) covering the costs for the researcher's employment contract (with a possible integration as foreseen in point 3, as follows);

¹ The Seal of Excellence is the high-quality label awarded by the European Commission to projects submitted to Horizon Europe, which were deemed to deserve funding, scoring 85% or above and therefore passing the quality threshold, but did not receive it due to budget limits (https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/seal-excellence_en)

² Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, letter b) of Unipd regulation on research grant contracts.

2. 10,000.00 Euros/year for research, training and networking activities;
3. For MSCA PF Global Fellowship projects, in line with the European standards adopted under the 2024³ Work Programme, for the mandatory outgoing phase only, a mobility allowance is granted, established as follows:
 - 500 Euros/month for a maximum of 24 months - corresponding to an annual supplement of 6,000 Euros on the base salary of 40,000 Euros, for projects involving an outgoing phase in countries with a correction coefficient of 115 or less;
 - For researchers going to countries whose European correction coefficient is higher than 115, the amount of the contract referred to in point 1 will be proportionally adjusted based on the coefficient of the host country for the outgoing phase, to cover the secondment period and for a maximum of 24 months⁴.

Article 2 – INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Researchers taking part in this call are considered eligible for funding if they possess the following **requirements** at the date of application:

- ✓ they have participated in the 2024 MSCA-PF Call for proposals (European Fellowship or Global Fellowship type), presenting a proposal in collaboration with a Supervisor working at UNIPD and for which UNIPD is indicated as the project Beneficiary;
- ✓ they have received the European Commission “Seal of Excellence - MSC Actions” and have scored 85% or above.

Researchers are **not eligible for funding** if they have already received the MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD funding, being awarded a grant in any of the previous calls (i.e., 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024).

The University of Padua will award funded researchers with a type B⁵ research grant (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*) contract. UNIPD will reserve the right, at its sole discretion, to replace the type B research grant (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*) contract with another contract type, economically equivalent, which should be made available by amendments introduced to Law no. 240/2010. Hereafter, the term “contract” will be used to refer to all applicable contract types.

Under penalty of exclusion from the ranking list and subsequent impossibility of proceeding with the funding, the participation requirements of the candidates will be verified at the start of the project in accordance with the applicable legal regulation.

Under all circumstances, candidates shall be considered as admitted to the selection process with reserve, and Unipd reserves the right to exclude them at any stage should it be determined that one or more participation requirements are not met.

³ Rif. p. 140 of the Work Programme 2024 MSCA-PF, Table 1: Country correction coefficients (CCC) for Doctoral Networks and Postdoctoral Fellowships living allowances https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-2-msca-actions_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf.

⁴ For example: for a 3-year GF project winner of the SoE@UNIPD 2025 call, involving two years spent in the United States (for which the 2024 Work Programme indicates a Correction coefficient higher than 115 and equal to 169.4) and a third year at the University, the contract will amount to €175,520.00 (year 1 and 2, or outgoing phase: €40,000.00 x 169.4 = €67,760 x 2 = €135,520.00; year 3, or return phase: €40,000.00; total: €135,520.00 + €40,000.00 = €175,520.00). Conversely, for a 3-year GF project winner of the SoE@UNIPD 2025 call, involving two years spent in a Third Country with a correction coefficient of 115 or less, the amount of the contract will amount to €132,000.00 (year 1 and 2, or outgoing phase: €40,000.00 + €6,000.00 = €46,000.00 x 2 = €92,000.00; year 3, or return phase: €40,000; total: €92,000 + €40,000 = €132,000).

⁵ Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, letter b) of Unipd regulation on research grant contracts.

Article 3 - APPLICATION PROCEDURE

This call and all documents supporting the application for funding are available at the following pages <https://www.unipd.it/msca-seal-excellence-2025> (in Italian) and <https://www.unipd.it/en/msca-seal-excellence-2025> (in English).

Each applicant is invited to submit an online application via [Google Form](#). The application must be duly completed with all relevant requested information, including the following documents⁶, in pdf format:

1. Copy of valid ID (national ID or passport);
2. Copy of PhD certificate or other equivalent degree. Italian candidates may attest their degree by presenting a self-certification as a “Statutory declaration” (*Dichiarazione sostitutiva* - Annex 1);
3. Letter of commitment of the Researcher (Annex 2);
4. Letter of Commitment signed by the Head of the Host Department at UNIPD. The Host Department must be the same as indicated by the candidate in the MSCA-PF project that was assigned the MSCA Seal of Excellence (Annex 3);
5. Copy of the MSCA-PF project submitted to the European Commission under the 2024 call (Part A, B1 and B2);
6. Evaluation Summary Report stating the MSCA-PF project score;
7. Copy of the Seal of Excellence Certificate awarded by the European Commission. UNIPD acknowledges that the Seal of Excellence Certificate may not be available at the time of application submission. Please note that the presentation of the Seal of Excellence Certificate will be eventually mandatory for the validation of funding for all selected MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD 2024 candidates. As soon as it becomes available, it shall be sent via email to: individual.grants@unipd.it.

Applications for funding shall be submitted exclusively online, via Google Form, by the following deadline

30 April 2025, 1 pm, Italian Time Zone

Incomplete or overdue applications will not be taken into consideration.

Article 4 - SELECTION PROCEDURE

The International Research Office of the University of Padua is in charge of the selection procedure, which consists in the administrative check for the eligibility of all the applications for funding, followed by a ranking list of eligible projects and the identification, in relation to the available budget, of the fundable projects.

4.1 - Eligibility Check

At the closure of the call, all proposals are subject to the administrative eligibility check in accordance with the requirements listed in Article 2. The applications are assessed to verify the correctness and completeness of the information provided by the candidates.

Ineligible candidates will receive an email including the reasons for the rejection and a reference to the redress procedure. From the receipt of the exclusion notice, candidates have 5 working days to report any errors found in the eligibility check carried out by UNIPD to the International Research Office (individual.grants@unipd.it) by email. After this period, the exclusion becomes final.

⁶ The *Letter of Commitment of the Researcher* and the *Letter of Commitment of the Host Institution* document templates are only available in English.

Under all circumstances, candidates shall be considered as admitted to the selection process with reserve, and Unipd reserves the right to exclude them at any stage should it be determined that one or more participation requirements are not met.

4.2 Selection of fundable projects

The University of Padua will produce a ranking list of proposals that are eligible for funding and – if applicable – a reserve list of fundable projects. In accordance with the objectives of the Seal of Excellence – MSC Actions and with the aim of granting funding to the most deserving candidates, the International Research Office will rank the projects based on the difference between the European Commission's score and the actual funding score threshold in the relevant MSCA panel within the scope of the MSCA-PF 2024 call⁷.

Eligible proposals will be funded until the available budget limit for this call is reached. In the event that additional funds are released, it will be possible to progressively fund the projects ranked in the reserve list and until the available budget is exhausted.

Any *ex-aequo* will be treated following the procedures applied by the European Commission within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions⁸.

The list of eligible and fundable projects, with the related requested funding amount, will be made available on line at <https://www.unipd.it/msca-seal-excellence-2025> (in Italian) and <https://www.unipd.it/en/msca-seal-excellence-2025> (in English) and at the International Research Office for the purpose of any requests of access to records.

Art. 5 - ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

The list of funded projects and the reserve list, approved by Rector's decree granting the funding, will be published online at <https://www.unipd.it/msca-seal-excellence-2025> (in Italian) and <https://www.unipd.it/en/msca-seal-excellence-2025> (in English).

Once the selection procedures have been completed, the funding assigned to the project is made available by UNIPD to the Department that is indicated in the project proposal. The budget shall include the annual cost covering the contract awarded to the researcher and the amount covering the research costs.

The recipients of the funding will be awarded by the University of Padua with a 40,000 Euros/year contract (gross to the institution). An additional supplement as Mobility Allowance, limited to the outgoing phase to be carried out in a Third Country, for a maximum of 24 months, shall be granted for MSCA PF Global Fellowship projects only (as specified in the criteria outlined in Article 1, point 3). The duration of the contract, which corresponds to that of the proposal that has received the MSCA Seal of Excellence, including the placement period, if applicable, cannot exceed 36 months. The research activity begins upon the signing of the contract and continues for the duration of the project.

A contribution of 10,000 Euros will be provided to cover costs for research activities, training, and networking (e.g., small equipment, travel, consumables, publications, etc.) necessary for the realization of the project. Expenses incurred outside the project period are not eligible.

The hosting Department shall agree the contract starting date with the researcher, under penalty of forfeiture. The date shall **not be later than 31 December 2025**.

⁷ Should the MSCA-PF funding threshold for each panel be unavailable at the time when the ranking list is elaborated, the International Research Office will rank eligible proposals in descending order of scores, using the nominal score reported on the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) issued by the European Commission.

⁸ For the MSCA-PF 2024, the evaluation criteria applied are specified in the 2023-24 Work Programme (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-2-msca-actions_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf)

Should the agreement not be entered into by this date, the winner shall forfeit the right to the funding. An extension to the agreed date may be allowed in exceptional cases, e.g. if a project requires an ethics review, in case of prolonged visa procedures, or in case of justified and documented personal problems. Any request to postpone the project after the ultimate starting date of **31 December 2025**, must be addressed to the International Research Office (individual.grants@unipd.it).

The signing of the contract shall not imply a subordinate employment relationship or ensure any rights to access permanent staff positions within Universities.

The Seal of Excellence @UNIPD funding is revoked for those who:

- as of the project start date, do not meet the legal requirements for the granting of a type B⁹ research grant (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*) contract or any other economically equivalent contract type, which the University reserves the right to apply.
- obtain an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship or sign any another contract incompatible with the applicable contract type, as established by the call's notice.

Article 6 - DUTIES OF RESEARCHERS OF FUNDED PROJECTS

The researchers funded under this call shall carry out the activities envisaged in the research project fully and personally. The research activities must comply with the MSCA-PF 2024 project that obtained the Seal of Excellence, as submitted in the application.

In order to verify that the objectives of the funded project have been fulfilled, at the end of every year of funded research activity, the researcher shall submit to the Head of the Hosting Department a detailed scientific report describing how the funding has been used, the implementation of the project, with reference to ethical issues - if applicable - and the results obtained. Any negative evaluation pertaining to the research activity, will cause the immediate termination of the contract with no further notice by UNIPD. Within 60 days since the end of the project, the researcher shall also submit a detailed scientific final report describing how the funding has been used, the implementation of the project, the results obtained (released or forthcoming publications, databases), any changes compared to the original proposal, and a comment on networks and partnerships that may have been initiated during the implementation of the research work. Researchers are expected to report on any seminars and conferences held throughout their project and on the possibility of further developing their research through other external funding.

The final scientific report, together with the approval issued by the Board of the Department hosting the research, shall be sent to the UNIPD International Research Office (individual.grants@unipd.it).

All publications resulting from the research funded under this call must display the programme name "MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD" and the project acronym.

Article 7 - ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

All research and innovation activities proposed shall comply with ethical principles and relevant national, EU and international legislation, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols.

Particular attention shall be paid to the principle of proportionality, the right to privacy, the right to the protection of personal data, the right to the physical and mental integrity of a person, the right to non-discrimination and the

⁹ The total duration of the type B research grant (*assegno di ricerca di tipo B*) established pursuant to art. 22 of the law of December 30, 2010, n. 240 (pre-existing version), including any renewals, extended by two years with the entry into force of Law no. 11 of February 27, 2015, which integrates paragraph 3, is six years (72 months).

need to ensure high levels of human health protection. Research and innovation activities proposed under these projects shall have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

Article 8 - FINAL PROVISIONS

For anything not specified in this call, see Law no. 240/2010, the University of Padua current **“Regulations Governing Research Grant Awards” and subsequent amendments and integrations, and current regulations.**

In accordance with the Italian Presidential Decree DPR 445/2000, at any stage of the procedure, the University shall have the right to verify the applicant’s self-certifications and statutory declaration. If the aforementioned statements are found to be false, then the declarer shall forfeit any benefits that they may have gained from the false statements, without prejudice to any sanctions envisaged by the Italian criminal code or by special laws that shall be governed by Art. 756 of Italian Presidential Decree DPR no. 445/2000.

The person responsible for this procedure is Andrea Berti, Head of the Research and Business Relations Area at the University of Padua.

For questions or information about this call for proposals, please contact: individual.grants@unipd.it.

This English version of the “MSCA Seal of Excellence @UNIPD” call is a courtesy translation and it has the sole purpose of enabling applicants to understand the content thereof; only the Italian version of the call is legally binding.

Padua, date of signature

The Rector

Daniela Mapelli

digitally signed according to legislative decree no. 82/2005

Attachments:

1. Statutory declaration (only for Italian and European candidates who wish to certify the possession of a PhD diploma awarded by an Italian University)
2. Letter of Commitment of the Researcher (mandatory)
3. Letter of Commitment of the Hosting Department, to be signed by the Head of the Hosting Department at UNIPD (mandatory)