



MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD Call 2022

Deadline: 9 May 2022 - 1 p.m. (Italian time zone)

PREAMBULE

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, in 2017, UNIPD announced the implementation of the "MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD" initiative, which is intended to attract young researchers carrying out high quality, innovative and ambitious research, with the final goal of strengthening the University ability to gain external competitive funding.

Funding for the 2022 MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD call (Programme or call) is allocated by the Italian Ministry of University and Research for a maximum budget of 1.5 million Euros. Costs associated to selected projects will be borne by the Fund for the promotion and development of the policies of the National Research Programme (PNR) as per ministerial decree no. 737 of 25 June 2021.

The call is addressed to researchers of all citizenships, who have:

- i) submitted a project under the 2021 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for applications (MSCA-PF);
- ii) indicated UNIPD as Beneficiary;
- iii) been awarded by the European Commission the "Seal of Excellence – MSC Actions"¹, scoring 85% or above but not being funded under the available call budget.

Article 1 – PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The Programme aims at supporting projects submitted by researchers who have received the "Seal of Excellence – MSC Actions" in the 2021 MSCA-PF Call for proposals and possess the requirements listed in Article 2 of the present call.

For every year of activity, that is specified in the MSCA-PF project submitted for funding, a financial contribution of 50.000,00 Euros is foreseen:

- 40.000,00 Euros per year (before tax) covering the costs for the researcher's employment contract;
- 10.000,00 Euros per year for research, training and networking activities.

Article 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Researchers participating in the present call must have

- ✓ competed in the 2021 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;
- ✓ received the European Commission "Seal of Excellence - MSC Actions" and have therefore 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);
- ✓ at the time of the project start, they may not be appointed through a "Research grant contract - type

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).

b" / "Contratto di assegno per lo svolgimento di attività di ricerca di tipo b" under the provisions of Art. 22 of Law no. 240 dated 30 December 2010 (see Article 5 below).

In case researchers are awarded a MSCA-Postdoctoral Fellowship after they have been funded in the framework of the present call, the MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD grant will be terminated.

Article 3 - APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The present call and all documents supporting the application for funding are available at the following web pages <https://www.unipd.it/msca-seal-excellence2022> (in Italian), <https://www.unipd.it/en/msca-seal-excellence-2022> (in English).

Each applicant is invited to present an online application via Google Form: <https://forms.gle/i9tNUonDZBm5A1zCA>. The application must be duly completed with all relevant requested information, including the documents listed below², 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" (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, which the candidate indicated in the project that was assigned the Seal of Excellence (Annex 3);
5. Copy of the MSCA-PF project submitted to the European Commission under the 2021 call (Part A and B);
6. *Evaluation Summary Report* stating the 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 2022 candidates.

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

Monday, 9 May 2022 - 1 p.m. (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 and, in compliance with the Seal of Excellence – MSC Actions objectives, will acquire the evaluation results deriving from the European Commission.

The International Research Office will first carry out an administrative eligibility check on all applications. Eligible proposals will be ranked based on the scores they have received from the European Commission and, considering the available budget under this call, the Office will identify the projects eligible for funding based on their ranking.

² The *Letter of Commitment of Researcher* and the *Letter of Commitment of the Host Institution* document templates are only available in English.

4.1 - Eligibility Check

At the closure of the call, all proposals shall be checked to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements in accordance with Article 2. Eligibility is checked on the basis of the information the candidate has provided in his/her application folder and verifying that all submitted documents and declarations are correct and complete.

Candidates excluded from the selection process will be informed via e-mail. Should a candidate detect an error in the eligibility check, (s)he can notify it to UNIPD, following the instructions specified in the email message. If a written notification is not sent within 5 working days after the proposal's disqualification is notified, this becomes effective.

In any case, applicants will be admitted to the selection process with reserve and UNIPD can disqualify proposals at any point of the selection process, should it find that any admission requirements are missing.

4.2 Selection of fundable projects

The University of Padua will establish a ranking list of proposals that, based on the score assigned by the European Commission and specified in the *Evaluation Summary Report*, are eligible for funding.

The financial support to the proposals in such ranking is established in accordance with the available budget. Any case of *ex-aequo* scores between candidates shall be treated according to the procedures applied by the European Commission within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions³.

The list of eligible projects and the related requested funding will be available online at <https://www.unipd.it/msca-seal-excellence2022> (in Italian), <https://www.unipd.it/en/msca-seal-excellence-2022> (in English) and at the International Research Office for the purpose of any requests to access the documents.

Art. 5 – ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

The list of funded projects, approved by Rector's decree, will be published online at <https://www.unipd.it/msca-seal-excellence2022> (in Italian), <https://www.unipd.it/en/msca-seal-excellence-2022> (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 research grant awarded to the researcher and the amount covering the research costs.

Applicants who receive funding shall be appointed through a Research Fellow contract ('Assegno di Ricerca Type B'). The contract will be drawn in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 2, clause b) of the current University Regulations for the awarding of research grants⁴, for a total amount of Euro 40,000.00 (gross amount) per year, for the period indicated in the proposal ("duration of the project").

The hosting Department shall agree the contract starting date with the researcher, under penalty of forfeiture. The starting date shall not be later than **31 October 2022**.

Should the agreement not be started by this date, the winner shall forfeit the right to the research grant. 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's starting date **after 31 October 2022** must be addressed to 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.

³ For the MSCA-PF 2021, the evaluation criteria applied are specified in the 2021-2022 Work Programme https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-2-msca-actions_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf

⁴ The document is available for download on the MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD dedicated web pages. Please refer to Article 6 (Admission requirements) and Art. 12 (Conflict of interest) for details on eligibility conditions of grant holders.

The research activity begins at the time the contract is signed and is carried out for the expected duration of the proposed project.

The contribution of 10.000 Euros shall cover the researcher's costs for research, training and networking activities (e.g. minor equipment, travel costs, consumables, publications and any other costs necessary for the implementation of the project). Expenses occurring outside the project period are not eligible.

Article 6 - DUTIES OF RESEARCHERS OF FUNDED PROJECTS

Researchers who are selected for funding in the framework of the present call shall personally and fully carry out the activities as envisaged in the MSCA-PF 2021 research project awarded with the Seal of Excellence and submitted to the present call.

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, 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 through their project and on the possibility of further developing their research through other external funding.

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

All publications resulting from the research funded under the present call must display the European flag (emblem) and the funding statement "funded by the European Union – NextGeneration EU"⁵, followed by the programme's name "MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD" and the project acronym. The "MSCA Seal of Excellence@UNIPD 2022" call funding has been allocated by the Ministry of University and Research and the costs of the projects will be borne by the Fund for the promotion and development of the policies of the National Research Programme (PNR) as per ministerial decree no. 737 of 25 June 2021.

Article 7 - ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

All the 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 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 the present 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

⁵ EU funding statement logos are available for download on the EC official page: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/logos_downloadcenter/

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 the present procedure is Francesca Mura, Head of the International Research Office 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 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 (mandatory)