Call for Applications for Full-Time Doctoral Students and Postdoctoral Fellows (Young Researchers)

The Board of Trustees of the Early Stage Grants (ESG) of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, at its meeting on June 26, 2024, approved the announcement of the call for applications under the internal grant scheme „Early stage grants “.

Call Announcement Date
30.06.2025

Application Submission Deadline
by 30.09.2025

Application Evaluation Results
by 17.11. 2025

Project Implementation Period
1. 1. 2026 – 30. 4. 2026

Eligible Applicants
Slovak or foreign full-time doctoral students or artistic-pedagogical, scientific-pedagogical, or research staff at the Academy of Performing Arts (VŠMU) up to 5 years after obtaining the ArtD. or PhD. degree. The 5-year period can be extended by the time spent on maternity/paternity/parental leave. The applicant must be either a full-time doctoral student or an employee of VŠMU during the entire project duration. The grant application is submitted by the doctoral or postdoctoral student as an individual researcher; research teams are not eligible to apply.

Amount of the grant
€6,000 for doctoral students, €12,000 for postdoctoral fellows for the entire approved project implementation period.

Focus of the Call

- Primarily supporting projects involving activities abroad and presenting research and creative results at international forums, promoting networking andinternationalization of our science and research
- Support for artistic-research and scientific-research activities of doctoral and young researchers
- Support for publications in scientific and professional journals
- Support for participation in conferences and other artistic-research and scientific-research events, especially abroad
- Support for the exchange of experiences and establishing contacts with foreign countries
- Grant funds can be used exclusively to cover costs associated with research, outputs, presentations, and publications

Eligible expenses

- Travel expenses for the applicant related to conference participation
- Consumables, purchase of specialized literature, and storage media
- Other goods and services necessary for project implementation
- Equipment and devices with an entry price not exceeding €1,700
- Software and valuable rights with an entry price not exceeding €2,400

Minimum Requirements for Project Goals

- Active presentation of a paper at a minimum of two scientific-research or artistic-research event (conferences, symposia, presentations, etc.) abroad or a workshop at a major extracurricular scientific and artistic platform abroad
- Completing a research stay abroad with clearly defined goals and outputs (outside the Erasmus+ program)
- For doctoral students in the university study program Theory of Theater, Film, and Music, and holders of the PhD. degree, submission of a published text or a confirmation from the editorial board of a peer-reviewed journal about the acceptance of one output for publication abroad
- For doctoral students in artistic study programs and holders of the ArtD. degree, submission of a published text or confirmation from an external professional journal about the acceptance of one professional output for publication in a professional journal or confirmation of the delivery of a lecture or workshop and presentation of the output at an event of international significance

Grant Application

is available for download in electronic form at www.vsmu.sk/umenie-veda-a-vyskum/early-stage-granty/. The completed application is sent by email to esg@vsmu.sk and after completion, printing, and signing by responsible persons, it is sent or personally delivered to the Rector's Office of the Academy of Performing Arts, Ventúrska 3, 813 01 Bratislava. The envelope should be marked with the keyword "ESG Grants".

Use of funding

In case of an approved application, the applicant - doctoral student will receive an allocated amount of €6,000, and the postdoctoral fellow will receive €12,000 for the entire project duration. Financial operations within the utilization of ESG funds are subject to all valid internal regulations of VŠMU, especially guidelines on document circulation and financial resource utilization. The funds allocated for project implementation will be utilized through the respective faculty where the researcher is a student or employee and will be credited to the faculty's budget. Financial operations will be carried out in close cooperation with the secretary and with the approval of the dean of the respective faculty. For doctoral students, each specific utilization must be approved by the supervisor.

Eligible expenses are direct current expenses incurred in connection with the implementation of ESG by researchers. Eligible expenses also include indirect expenses of the applicant - the institutionproviding the ESG scheme administration. Eligible direct expenses of the ESG holder include:

a) Travel expenses of the ESG holder.
b) Consumables, other goods, and services necessary for project implementation.
c) Equipment and devices with an entry price not exceeding €1,700.
d) Software and valuable rights with an entry price not exceeding €2,400.
e) VAT is an eligible expense if its refund is not applicable according to national VAT regulations.

Results Documentation

Project results are summarized in the Interim Report and in the Final Report submitted by March 31, 2026. The reports include a brief evaluation of the project results achieved during its implementation in relation to the declared goals and fulfillment of planned outputs. Activities funded by the grant must thematically relateto the project. Outputs funded by the ESG grant must also mention the support from ESG funds.The report includes an overview of expenses specifying what the funds were used for. For expenses related to conferences and other presentation platforms, a program, valid internet link,and details of the event (name, time, place) should be attached. For completed foreign stays, thepurpose, place, duration, and confirmation from the host institution must be provided. The finalreport's annexes include copies of published outputs, including abstracts of conference papers and workshops, and other documentation.
The Interim and Final Reports will be reviewed by ESG board members. If deficiencies are found, the researcher will be asked to provide additional information.

Application Evaluation and Selection Rules

1) The professional assessment of grant applications is provided by the ESG Board through evaluators appointed by the ESG Board.

2) Each application must be assessed by at least two evaluators. If evaluators disagree on the application recommendation, the ESG Board will arrange for a third evaluator to assess the application.

3) In evaluating grant applications, the ESG Board must strive to prevent conflicts of interest as much as possible. Project evaluators must not have a direct implementation relationship with the project under evaluation.

4) Evaluators are entitled to a fee for each review. The VŠMU Rector will decide the amount of the fee for evaluators in the given call based on the ESG Board's proposal.

5) The evaluation takes the form of a written assessment by the reviewer, completed on a standardized form based on the following criteria:
    a) Quality of project preparation, feasibility of objectives, and the practicality of implementation within the proposed timeline.
    b) Artistic, scientific, or research value of the project, particularly its relevance, originality, social urgency of the topic, alignment with current trends at home and abroad.
    c) Contribution of the project to the development of the artistic and scientific-research objectives of VŠMU, especially the applicability of project outputs within the evaluation of the school's activities in the Central Registry of Publication Activities (CREPČ) and the Central Registry of Artistic Activities

(CREUČ).

d) Quality and success of the applicant's previous scientific, research, and creative activities, as well as their management of scientific-research and artistic-research projects in the past.
e) Appropriateness of financial requirements.

6) The ESG Board's decisions on grant support are final and cannot be appealed. Successful applicants will sign a grant agreement.

7) Based on the ESG Board's decision on project grant allocation, a contract is concluded between the provider - VŠMU and the project researcher. The ESG Board's decision or the contract does not create any rights or resulting financial claims for third parties against VŠMU.

8) The Rector signs the contract for VŠMU as the provider. The Rector may not sign the contract with the researcher only if it is proven that the provisions of these guidelines or other regulations related to the grant provision and use have demonstrably not been complied with.

9) The call will support projects of 2 doctoral students and 1 postdoctoral fellow with the highest scores.

10) ESG support is non-transferable to another person or project.

Project Implementation

Project results will be implemented through presentations at conferences, workshops, and other artistic-research and scientific-research events, and through publication outputs in professionaland scientific journals. Each approved researcher will receive a contract outlining all mandatoryoutputs, and non-compliance with the contract conditions will result in penalties equal to the amount of misused funds.

Final provision

There is no legal entitlement to any scholarship or support from this call. The Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (VŠMU) reserves the right to make transparent changes to the call announcement. It also reserves the right not to implement the call if financial resources from the Recovery Plan ofthe Slovak Republic are not allocated.

Mgr. Jana Keeble
Chair of the ESG Board