



**Croatian Science Foundation**



**Call for Proposals  
(010.) “Young Researchers' Career  
Development Project – Training of Doctoral  
Students”**

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Young Researchers' Career Development Programme

*This Call is based upon the General Acts of the Croatian Science Foundation. By applying to the Call you accept its terms and obligations. The terms in the masculine gender used in this Call for Proposals are neutral and refer to persons of either gender.*



## About the programme

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One of the main reasons for public (budgetary) financing of science is the improvement of human resources. Future development of basic, applied and developmental research, transfer and application of new technologies, as well as creating conditions for innovation and their application, depends on the quality of postgraduate training of young researchers, planning and developing their careers and capabilities of the Republic of Croatia to retain the best young scientists and encourage their employment, not only in the scientific and academic sectors, but also in the economic sector. The strategic goal of the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ) is to develop a comprehensive programme of funding career development of young researchers, from doctoral studies to post-doctoral specialisations in Croatia and abroad, as well as to actively encourage the mobility for the academic to economic sector.

### **Aim of the “Young researchers' career development project – training of doctoral students” Call for proposals**

Croatian Science Foundation announces this Call in order to enable scientifically active mentors who are engaged in internationally and/or nationally significant issues to involve in their research projects young researchers who wish to participate in scientific research and focus their career towards cutting-edge science. The ultimate goal is the training of new doctoral students who will continue their career in competitive research and/or development of new technologies in the economy.

Also, this Call encourages the strengthening of mentoring capacities in Croatian scientific institutions, transfer, adoption and application of new knowledge and enhancing the level of postgraduate education and scientific development of young researchers.

The Call has provided funding of doctoral students' gross salary, with the primary aim of completing a doctorate thesis and the acquisition of knowledge about the basic principles of scientific work and research. The mentor must clearly explain the methods of training, work methods, doctoral student's research tasks, as well as the application of acquired knowledge.

### **Call goals**

- The development of a stable doctoral students' financing system
- Encouraging training of new PhDs
- Increasing the number of young researchers
- Increasing the doctoral students' competences
- Strengthening mentoring capacities in Croatian research institutions
- Creation of new and improvement of existing knowledge and human resources that contribute to social development based on knowledge and scientific achievements.

## Call in brief

**Call release date:** May 15<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Mentors' application deadline:** June 13<sup>th</sup> 2014, until 13:00 CET

Scientists from all scientific fields can apply.

**Mentor:** scientist with internationally recognized achievements in science and/or technology.

**Total budget:** 30.000.000,00 HRK

**Single amount of funding:** doctoral student's annual gross II salary

**Funding duration:** 2 + 2 years

**Estimated starting date:** fall 2014



## Call procedure

### Step 1

Applications of interested mentors are possible only through Electronic Application and Assessment System (EPP system) which is available on the HRZZ website. Mentors must be employed at public universities, public research institutes, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts or other scientific institutions entered in the Register of scientific organizations. The mentor is responsible for the scientific progress of the doctoral student and must be an active researcher.

The Foundation conducts the applications evaluation and makes a decision on the choice of approved mentors.

### Step 2

The list of approved mentors is published on the Foundation's website. Institutions that employ approved mentors release calls for doctoral students in accordance with the conditions<sup>1</sup> established by the Foundation's Board, in consultation with the approved mentors.

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions may have additional criteria, but must respect the criteria established by the Foundation's Board.

Institutions that have released the calls verify eligibility and issue a proposition for the selection of doctoral students. The proposition of selected doctoral candidates and proof of eligibility are submitted to the Foundation.

### Step 3

Institutions sign an employment contract with doctoral students for the first period of funding (two years).



## Call conditions

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### General conditions

- Candidates for mentors can apply for only one doctoral student per Call.
- It is possible to apply for one doctoral student per project per Call.
- The advantage is that a candidate does not currently mentor a doctoral student or mentors a smaller number of doctoral students.

### Call conditions for mentors

#### Formal criteria:

- A scientist with an academic or academic research title who is permanently employed at a Croatian public university, public research institute, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts<sup>2</sup> or a scientific institution which is entered in the Register of scientific organizations.
- A scientist who defended his doctoral thesis at least four years prior to the Call deadline.
- Principal investigator or team member of a scientific project financed by the Croatian Science Foundation, UKF, various EU (FP7, Horizon 2020) and other competitive international research projects with which will be related the scientific development of doctoral students. The project must last at least 18 months after the application deadline.
- Statement of financial cover of doctoral study and doctoral student's research development, signed by the head of the institution and/or Principal Investigator (depending on who covers the costs). If costs are funded from various sources, it is necessary to attach a statement signed by responsible persons and the head of those institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> Regular members of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts who are not permanently employed submit forms signed by the head of the Academy.

### Scientific criteria:

- Scientific activities (publications, projects, patents, international cooperation).
- Mentorship experience.
- A detailed plan of the development of doctoral student's scientific-research career.
- A detailed plan for financing education and scientific-research work of the doctoral student.
- Institutional support with clearly detailed elements of support.



## Funding and estimated budget

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The total budget of the "Young researchers' career development project – training of doctoral students" programme for 2014 amounts 30,000,000.00 HRK.

The largest single amount of funding refers to the amount of doctoral student's annual gross II salary. Mentors employed at public universities, public research institutes and the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts may request the full amount of funding, and for mentors employed at other institutions **the financing of only half of the gross II annual salary is possible.**

Foundation transfers the funds into the account of the institution where the mentor is employed and with whom the doctoral student enters into a contract of employment, and the institution then pays his monthly salary.



## Registration and application procedure

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Prior to registering, please read the Guidelines for applying to **Young researchers' career development project – training of doctoral students** Call for proposals, as well as all available forms and evaluation criteria. All above mentioned can be found on the Foundation's website of the ([www.hrzz.hr](http://www.hrzz.hr)).

Applications can be sent **in electronic form** only, through Electronic Application and Assessment System (EPP) available at Foundation website.

Entire application documentation should be written in Croatian language.

Applications must be complete and submitted into the electronic system before the Call deadline.

**Incomplete applications and applications submitted after the above mentioned deadline will not be taken into consideration.**

## Application forms

### 1. Administrative form

### 2. Form A:

- section a – mentor's CV
- section b – mentor's 5-year track-record
- section c – doctoral student's scientific and research career development plan
- section d – detailed plan for financing education and scientific and research work of the doctoral student

### 3. Form B

- detailed plan of doctoral student's career development

### 4. Form C

- Institutional support – clearly outlined elements from which it is evident that the institution provides adequate space, equipment and other infrastructural requirements for scientific and research work of doctoral student. If the institution covers the cost of doctoral studies, it is necessary to specify the amount.

- 5. Certificate of the participation in the project**, mentor's status in the project, duration and budget, signed by the principal investigator and the head of the institution where the project is implemented. If the costs of doctoral studies are covered from the project, it is necessary to specify the amount.



## Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated by members of the Evaluation Panel in accordance with the Evaluation Form 1 - criteria for evaluating candidates for mentors (available on the Foundation's website).

### **A. Criteria for evaluating candidates for mentors**

Mentor's excellence and research independence, capacity for mentoring doctoral students and planning the development doctoral student's research career and institutional support are evaluated.

#### 1. Quality and previous achievements

- Research activity in the last five years (publications in relevant journals and books, implementing and participating in projects, patents, international visibility and collaboration).

#### 2. Ability to mentor a doctoral student

- Status of a principal investigator or a team member on a research project that will last at least 18 months after the Call deadline, and with which the scientific and research work of the doctoral student will be related and which can cover material costs of scientific research, education costs and dissemination of doctoral student's achievements.
- Success in managing doctoral student's career development on the basis of previous achievements in management of doctoral students (number of defended doctoral thesis within the provided time, the ratio of started mentorships and completed doctoral thesis, etc.).
- Achievements and quality of candidates that guarantee the quality management of the doctoral student, although the candidate did not previously mentored young researchers.
- Number of doctoral students that the candidate currently mentors.

### **3. Plan of scientific development of doctoral student**

- A detailed plan of doctoral student's scientific development with measurable indicators (milestones) of the plan realisation, related to the expected achievement of doctoral studies and scientific and research work during the funding period.
- Compliance of the planned doctoral thesis with doctoral studies and the topic of the research project or research paper on which the mentor works and which will be related to scientific and research work of the doctoral student.
- A clear demonstration of doctoral student's research training, as well as possible obstacles and ways to solving them.
- Doctoral student must devote 100% of his working time to research related to his doctoral thesis.
- Plan for financing doctoral studies, the material costs of scientific and research work and participation in disseminating the results of doctoral work, specifying the costs and the expected sources of funding.

### **4. Institutional support**

- Consent of the head of the institution for supporting the scientific development of the doctoral student, with clearly stated elements which shows that the institution will provide adequate space, equipment and other infrastructural requirements for the doctoral students' research work. If the institution covers the cost of doctoral studies, it is necessary to specify the amount.

## **B. Criteria for evaluation of doctoral students**

### **General conditions**

- Completed the appropriate graduate or integrated studies.

- Grade point average (GPA) on previous levels of study (undergraduate, graduate or integrated study) that ensures the enrolment into doctoral studies.
- Only candidates whose institution has released a call for the enrolment of new doctoral students<sup>3</sup> in the academic year 2014/2015 can apply.
- If a candidate is a doctoral student, funding may be granted for the remainder of the time to a maximum of four years, minus the years of completed studies.
- The candidate whose doctoral education the Foundation has already funded, but did not complete the study, cannot apply to this Call.

The excellence of doctoral candidates is evaluated.

### 1. Doctoral student's quality and achievements

- Grade point average (GPA) on previous levels of study (undergraduate, graduate or integrated study) that ensures the enrolment to doctoral studies.
- Previous honors, awards, etc. for excellence in study and research work.

### 2. Potential for scientific progress

- Participation in scientific research, published papers, personal presentations at scientific conferences.

List of positively evaluated mentors is published on the Foundation's website. **Institutions that employ approved mentors will release calls for doctoral students** according to the criteria established by the Board of the Foundation. Institutions may, in consultation with mentors, have additional selection criteria, but must respect the criteria established by the Foundation.

Institutions sign a contract of employment with the doctoral student for the first two years of financial support.



## Doctoral students' obligations

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### Reports

- After **18 months** of employment, the mentor and doctoral student will, among other documents, submit a periodic report to the Foundation on the implementation of the doctoral student's career development plan, and obligations of the first three semesters of doctoral studies, using milestones from the career development plan.
- The continuation of funding will be approved if the report is positively evaluated, i.e. if all the obligations planned in the doctoral study are carried out and if the

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<sup>3</sup> Does not apply to candidates who have already enrolled in doctoral studies.

realisation of the career development plan is positively evaluated according to the milestones that are listed in the career development plan.

- After approving the funding continuation, institutions will sign the new contract with the doctoral student for the next two years of funding.
- Mentor and doctoral student will submit the second periodic report after 36 months together with the evidence on the final stage of doctoral thesis. In justified circumstances (e.g. maternity and/or parental leave, long-term illness) and with an argued request from a mentor and doctoral student an extension of funding for a period of six months after the expiration of four years of funding may be approved (or extended for the duration of maternity leave or illness).
- **The final report** must be submitted within 30 days of funding completion. The candidate shall submit the evidence of successfully defended doctoral thesis.
- The mentor and the candidate are required to submit a report on the fulfilment of obligations and requested documentation upon the Foundation's written request, even regardless of the periodic reports' deadlines.

### Other obligations

- Compliance with the approved doctoral student's career development plan, financial liabilities (covering the costs of doctoral studies) and other contractual obligations.
- Accepting the possibility of occasional control on the progress of doctoral students conducted by the expert team of the Foundation.
- If there are objective difficulties in achieving career development plan or doctoral thesis it is necessary to immediately inform the Foundation.
- Registration of published papers, conference papers, posters, etc., and emphasizing the financial contribution of the Foundation.

### Unrealised plan for the development of doctoral students

- In case of difficulties in achieving career development plan, the mentor and the doctoral student or the institution are required to promptly inform the Foundation.
- In case of a negative evaluation of periodic reports, i.e. if it is determined that the doctoral student career development plan was not implemented as foreseen in the contract, the mentor and the doctoral student will be liable for the breach of contractual obligations which will be further elaborated in the contract. The Foundation has the right to suspend further funding and can claim a refund of the funds.



## Application deadline

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Application deadline: **June 13<sup>th</sup> 2014 until 13:00 (CET).**



## Contact

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All enquiries related to the Call will be accepted only **via the following e-mail address:**  
[doktorandi@hrzz.hr](mailto:doktorandi@hrzz.hr)