



**THE REGULATIONS OF THE DOCTORAL
GRANT COMPETITION**

Part I.

Article 1

Fundamental Regulations

This document sets the rules for the operation of the Doctoral Grant Competition of VSB - Technical University of Ostrava (VSB-TUO). These rules set out the criteria and method of providing targeted support through a university-wide competition for research carried out by doctoral students at VSB-TUO, and broken down by scientific areas set by R&D classifications in accordance with the Frascati manual of 2015 (Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Social Sciences), and aims to support scientific research and creative activities and thereby lead to an increase in the competitiveness of VSB-TUO.

Article 2

Founder

The Founder of the Doctoral Grant Competition (DGS) is the VSB - Technical University of Ostrava (VSB-TUO), with its registered office at 17. listopadu 2172/15, 708 00 Ostrava - Poruba.

Article 3

General Terms

The Doctoral Grant Competition (hereinafter DGS): a competition to support doctoral research grants financed from the resources of the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education (hereinafter OP RDE) and provided in accordance with the Regulations of the Doctoral Grant Competition.

The Student Grant (hereinafter referred to as the DGS project): a research project solved by full-time students of VSB-TUO doctoral study programmes.

Student Grant Investigator: individual investigator, principal investigator, or other researchers of the student grant project.

Individual Student Grant Investigator: a student of one of the VSB-TUO doctoral study programmes, who implements a student grant, the only researcher of which is himself/herself, and at the same time is therefore the principal investigator. The individual investigator must be a full-time student throughout the implementation of the student grant.

Principal Student Grant Investigator: a student of one of the VSB-TUO doctoral study programmes who applies for a team student grant on his/her own behalf and who is responsible for coordinating and leading the research team and fulfilling the planned goals and outputs of the student grant. The principal investigator must be a full-time student throughout the implementation of the student grant.

Other Members of the Research Team: one or more full-time students of the VSB-TUO doctoral study programmes who participate in the resolution of the team student grant under the guidance of the principal investigator.

Mentor: an academic, scientific, research or development worker, working at one of the VSB-TUO research centres with a minimum academic degree of PhD who provides professional and methodological support to DGS student grant researchers. The mentor can also be a supervisor of one of the researchers of the DGS project.

Member of the Research Team: student grant researcher, research supervisor, mentor.

VSB-TUO research centres: IT4I, CPIT and research centres that are part of the University institute, CEET (ENET Centre, CNT, IET, ERC).

Monthly Activity Report: a report submitted at regular monthly intervals by the principal investigator and other researchers of the student grant. The Monthly Activity Report is one of the mandatory outputs of the student grant and its submission is therefore one of the conditions for recognising the eligibility of costs of the OP RDE project.

Final Activity Report: a report submitted by the principal investigator after the end of the student grant.

Work Capacity of the Student Grant Investigator: the degree of involvement of individual researchers (individual, principal or other) in the implementation of the DGS student grant, i.e. the scope of the activities required to achieve the set objectives of the student grant assigned to the researcher. Work capacity is expressed in terms of the amount of working time.

Article 4

The Objectives of the Doctoral Grant Competition VSB-TUO

The aim of the Doctoral Grant Competition (DGS) is:

- a) to improve the conditions for the preparation of new research teaching staff and, in connection to this, the consequent strengthening of human resources for research and development, to a level comparable to the leading European universities, and the achievement of international competitiveness within European and global research activities;
- b) to increase and support the scientific-research activities of students of doctoral study programmes in cooperation with academic, scientific, research or development staff at individual VSB-TUO research centres, or at individual faculties, provided that the research itself is conducted under one of the VSB-TUO research centres;
- c) to strengthen internationalisation and thus increase the number of mobilities of internal doctoral students to foreign research institutes, to stimulate and strengthen team research activities, to ensure access to foreign technologies and experimental equipment, and publication of the achieved results in international authors' teams;
- d) to support interdisciplinary cooperation, the acceleration of applied results with a significant international impact, increasing the efficiency of the use of existing instrumentation and laboratory facilities, and the creation of supporting educational tools for doctoral students;

e) to apply the practical skills of doctoral students in project management (define the purpose, objectives, outputs and activities of the project and determine the financial resources for each activity).

Part II.

Article 5

Implementation Team of the Doctoral Grant Competition VSB-TUO

The implementation team of DGS (project OP RDE) at VSB-TUO is composed of:

The Administrative Team - Project Manager, Financial Manager, Project Assistant/Administrator. Meetings of the administrative team are convened by the Project Manager.

The Expert Team - Principal Investigator of the OP RDE project, Expert Guarantor, members of the Expert Panel, Expert Administrator, Education Coordinator and IT Specialist. Meetings of the Expert Team are convened by the Principal Investigator of the OP RDE project or the Expert Guarantor.

Meetings of the implementation team are convened by the Project Manager, the Principal Investigator of the OP RDE project or the Expert Guarantor of the DGS, as required.

Principal Investigator of the OP RDE project: is represented by the top representative of VSB-TUO in the position of Vice-Rector for Science and Research. The principal investigator of the OP RDE project provides:

- a professional level of implementation and outputs of the OP RDE project, compliance with strategic development documents of the University and connection to individual parts of the University and their management;
- coordination and control of the work activities of individual professional staff.

The DGS Expert Guarantor performs the following tasks:

- guarantees the professional content of the grant competition, is responsible for its material and formal setting, sets the schedule for the preparation and implementation of individual rounds of the DGS and is responsible for its compliance;
- ensures the announcement of the individual rounds of the DGS, is responsible for its ongoing evaluation, verifies the results of formal evaluation, and is responsible for setting up methodological support for opponents;
- verifies the professional outputs of individual grant projects and their compliance with DGS topics, continuously checks the course of individual student grants, checks the quality of professional outputs, is responsible for meeting the set indicators, guarantees outputs and documents for interim reports on OP RDE project implementation;
- manages and coordinates the work of the DGS Expert Panel, the DGS Expert Administrator and the Education Coordinator.

The DGS Expert Administrator ensures the following:

- receipt of applications for DGS student grants, formal control of submitted applications, and addressing of opponents;
- formal control and approval of monthly reports of researchers, formal control and approval of final activity reports of student grant researchers;
- administration and approval of changes in approved grant applications, annexes (changes of researchers, changes of mentors), and keeping statistics of indicators from grants.

The DGS Expert Panel is managed by the DGS Expert Guarantor and provides the following:

- approves and modifies the rules of DGS, approves and modifies the related internal regulations of VSB-TUO related to the implementation of DGS;
- provides methodological support for opponents, proposes external opponents according to the focus of DGS;
- sets up the DGS evaluation process, directly participates in the DGS evaluation and thus fulfils the function of the evaluation panel, checks the professional intentions and outputs of the DGS, evaluates supported student grants;
- participates in the creation/modification of supporting educational tools for PhD students (e.g. workshops, courses, individual counselling).

The Education Coordinator performs the following activities:

- organisation and preparation of professional educational courses, and analyses the educational needs of grant implementers;
- implements educational courses, communicates with lecturers and the target group;
- prepares and implements training for administrative staff and doctoral students on the new grant competition and its conditions;
- checks and prepares outputs (certificates of education, certificates, etc.), records credits of the relevant indicators of the OP RDE project.

Article 6 Expert Panel

1. The Expert Panel is established by the Statute of the DGS Expert Panel.
2. The term of office of the members of the Expert Panel is set for the duration of the OP RDE project, namely 1st September 2020 – 30th June 2023.
3. The DGS Expert Panel is established at the University level and combines the three areas of research and development, which correspond to the material focus of accredited doctoral study programmes at VSB-TUO: Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Social Sciences.
4. The Expert Panel consists of 9 members.
5. Meetings of the Expert Panel are convened by the DGS Expert Guarantor or an authorised member of the Expert Panel.
6. The Expert Panel meets regularly, at least once per calendar quarter.

7. The members of the Expert Panel assess new and follow-up DGS project proposals and evaluate the completed ones. The members of the Expert Panel assess the results of the solved student grants and check the accuracy of all data reported in the DGS information system. The members of the Expert Panel deal with suggestions and comments from the researchers within their competence.

8. After discussion with the members of the panel, the Expert Panel agrees on the change of the principle investigator of the student grant, mentor, or other researcher of the student grant, as well as the premature termination of the student grant.

9. The Expert Panel has a quorum if more than half of its members is present. The Expert Panel decides by consensus. In the event that the Expert Panel does not reach a consensus, the Expert Guarantor shall decide on the voting. Decisions of the Expert Panel are taken on the basis of a majority of votes of the members present. The Expert Guarantor may vote; in the event of a tie, the Expert Guarantor has the decisive vote.

10. Members of the Expert Panel who are subject to a conflict of interest must leave the meeting room when discussing individual DGS student projects.

Part III.

Article 7

Criteria for Awarding a DGS Student Grant

1. The DGS project is implemented at one of the VSB-TUO research centres.
2. Only a full-time student of one of the doctoral study programmes at VSB-TUO can be the investigator of a student grant supported from DGS resources.
3. In the case of a research team, other researchers participate in the solution of the team student grant under the leadership of the principal investigator. The research team has a maximum of 5 researchers. A researcher can be involved in only one DGS project at a time.
4. The DGS project proposal must not be identical with the topic of the dissertation of any of the researchers.
5. The supervisor of the investigator is always a member of the research team. The investigator has the support of a supervisor who is in an employment relationship with VSB-TUO, and a mentor. The supervisor and mentor can be the same person. The supervisor confirms with his/her consent that the topic of the DGS project proposal does not coincide with the topic of the investigator's dissertation. On the other hand, the mentor's approval of the project proposal confirms the professional value of the proposed DGS project, the above-standard level of the planned outputs and their feasibility. The number of mentors per DGS project is at least one, the maximum number is limited by the number of researchers.
6. The principal investigator is responsible for solving the DGS project and adhering to all DGS principles.
7. The output of the DGS project must not be the dissertation of one of the researchers as a whole. The doctoral student can use the result and output of the DGS project in his/her

dissertation. Using the result and output of the DGS project, a doctoral student can fulfil a partial obligation of his/her individual study plan (publishing activity, scientific conference, etc.).

8. The project proposal submitted to the DGS is assessed by at least two external opponents, at least one of whom must be from abroad.

9. The duration of the DGS project is 12 or 24 months.

10. A student grant of 12 months may amount to a maximum of CZK 958 320, and in the case of a DGS project of 24 months to a maximum of CZK 1 916 640 (assuming the use of the maximum working capacity of the student grant corresponding to 1.0 full-time).

11. It is not allowed to change the student grant researcher, who is an individual investigator. The person of the main researcher can only be replaced by another existing researcher of the student grant project.

12. Each researcher of a DGS student grant, submits a Monthly Activity Report via the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system (https://grantové_soutěže.vsb.cz). The Monthly Activity Report will be prepared by each researcher for each month of the DGS project implementation. The deadline for the submission of the Monthly Activity Report is the 25th day of the month at the latest. In case the 25th of the month is a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, the last day for submission will be the working day preceding that day (i.e. if the 25th is a Saturday, the deadline day will be Friday 24th, if the 25th is Sunday, the last day for submission will be Friday 23rd). The Monthly Activity Report is formally reviewed and approved by the DGS Expert Administrator. Based on his/her opinion, orders for payment of the scholarship will be issued. If the report is not submitted by the deadline, the scholarship will not be paid. For the last month of the project, each researcher will submit a Monthly Activity Report for that month, and the principal investigator will also prepare a Final Activity Report, which is a condition for the payment of the last month's scholarship to all members of the research team. The Monthly Activity Reports are a mandatory output of the student grant and are a condition for recognising the eligibility of OP RDE project costs. The activity report is signed by the mentor for each researcher.

13. Project proposals, Monthly Activity Reports, or interim and final reports are submitted within the Doctoral Grant Competition via the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system (https://grantové_soutěže.vsb.cz).

14. For signature purposes, an electronic signature is a fully-fledged alternative to a handwritten signature.

Article 8

Criteria for Evaluating DGS Project Proposals

The main criteria for evaluating DGS project proposals are:

- a) the qualifications of the members of the research team,
- b) the topicality, scientific relevance, and professional level of the proposed project,

- c) the level of project processing (definition of objectives, conception and determination of results),
- d) suitability of the topic,
- e) degree of internationalisation and interdisciplinary cooperation,
- f) the adequacy of the project solution schedule,
- (g) the adequacy of the funding requirements.

Article 9

DGS Project Proposal Applications

1. Applications for DGS project proposals must be drafted and submitted in English.
2. The doctoral grant competition is announced every year on October 1st at 12:00.
3. Applications for DGS project proposals shall be submitted exclusively via the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system (https://grantové_soutěže.vsb.cz) during the period from 1st October to 12th November until 15:00 of the year preceding the year of grant award. The printed application, signed by all responsible persons, is submitted immediately by the principal investigator to the DGS Expert Administrator. The printed DGS project proposal application must be identical to the application submitted electronically.
4. The application to DGS is a project proposal for scientific research activities processed in the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system (https://grantové_soutěže.vsb.cz). DGS project proposals must include the following:
 - a) the name of the project;
 - b) the principal investigator of the project;
 - c) other researchers of the research team;
 - d) mentor of the principal investigator of the project, or mentors of other researchers of the research team;
 - e) supervisors of individual researchers (if they are not mentors at the same time);
 - f) project solution time;
 - g) requirement for the amount of support and the corresponding financial budget;
 - h) the consent of the mentor of the principal investigator and the supervisors of individual researchers;
 - i) subject of research within the project (annotation);
 - j) professional characteristics of the project, in which it will be briefly stated:
 - characteristics of the investigated problem,
 - current state of the solution,
 - project objectives and how to achieve them,

- time schedule;

k) expected outputs;

l) planned educational/research activity abroad (purpose, date, time and place of stay, justification of the direct connection of the foreign trip with the project). Each researcher with a work capacity of 0.3 of full-time and higher must carry out at least one educational/research activity abroad during the implementation of the DGS student grant.

m) planned educational activities (seminars, training courses, lectures, etc.).

5. In the event of a change in the content of the DGS project proposal application based on the decision of the Expert Panel, this application must be edited by the principal investigator of the student grant in the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system ([https://grantové soutěže.vsb.cz](https://grantove.soutezhe.vsb.cz)), reprinted, signed and submitted to the DGS Expert Administrator for filing with the original application, within 14 days of the decision of the Expert Panel.

6. After receiving the applications of DGS project proposals, the Expert Panel will select from the database of assessors two external opponents for the elaboration of opponent's opinions, while one of the external evaluators must be a foreign opponent. External opponents may not be in an employment relationship with the evaluating institution or any of its components at the time of the evaluation of DGS project proposals. An exception to this rule is employment relations, the subject of which is the evaluation of DGS project proposals within this call or within other grant competitions at VSB-TUO.

7. External opponents will prepare an opponent's report by January 15th of the year in which the grant was awarded.

Article 10

Evaluation of DGS Project Proposals

1. The DGS Expert Panel acts as an evaluation panel and decides on the award of a DGS student grant.

2. Meetings of the Expert Panel for the purpose of evaluating DGS project proposals shall be convened by the DGS Expert Guarantor.

3. The Expert Panel when evaluating submitted DGS project proposals must be based on the opinions of external evaluators.

4. The Expert Panel has a quorum for the evaluation of DGS project proposals if more than half of its members is present. The panel will decide on the selection of DGS projects for support by consensus. In the event that the Expert Panel does not reach a consensus, the Expert Guarantor shall decide on the voting. Decisions of the Expert Panel are taken on the basis of a majority of votes of the members present. The Expert Guarantor may vote; in the event of a tie, the Expert Guarantor has the decisive vote.

Members of the Expert Panel who are in conflict of interest must leave the meeting room when discussing individual DGS student projects.

5. The Expert Panel is obliged to prepare a record of the evaluation of DGS project proposals and determine their order, which will include a clear way of evaluating DGS project proposals and the signatures of more than half of all members of the Expert Panel. The Expert Panel is obliged to keep this record with the Project Manager in accordance with the valid regulations.

Article 11

Drawing on a DGS Student Grant

1. Financial support for a DGS project may only be used to cover the eligible costs of the project:

- a) personnel costs of the student grant investigators in the form of a scholarship;
- b) other costs.

2. The obligatory amount of work capacity of the principal investigator of the student grant corresponds to 0.5 of full-time. The amount of work capacity of other student grant researchers is set in the range of 0.1 - 0.5 of full-time per person.

The principal investigator must always report a work capacity of 0.5 of full-time per month. During the DGS student grant, it is possible to adjust only the amount of work capacity of other researchers, provided that the work capacity in the range of 0.1 - 0.5 of full-time is maintained and at the same time such an adjustment does not increase the student grant budget.

For all student grant investigators, the total amount of time may be no more than 1.2 times the working time fund for the month in question, including the scholarship (in the case of a scholarship for the student grant, the amount of the unit's working capacity in terms of time is counted).

3. The amount of the unit cost is determined as follows:

- a) The amount of the unit cost corresponding to the work capacity of 0.1 of full-time/month of one student grant researcher is CZK 7 986. In the case of team grants, the unit is the sum of the work capacities of all members of the research team, i.e. the maximum support is CZK 79 860.
- b) The amount that must be used to cover the personnel costs of the researcher is CZK 4 667 for a working capacity corresponding to 0.1 of full-time/month.

The exact payment of the minimum personnel costs is the subject of an on-site inspection, when the beneficiary of the OP RDE project is obliged to provide specific documents proving the payment of the given personnel costs.

- c) The amount that the beneficiary can use to cover other costs associated with the implementation of student grants is CZK 3 319 (per unit with a work capacity corresponding to 0.1 of full-time/month of one researcher).

4. Other costs include:

- other direct expenses related to the implementation of the student grant, e.g. material, small equipment, software, professional literature, travel expenses, external education;

- costs associated with the organisation and administration of student grants, such as overheads, ensuring the payroll of student grant researchers, financial management of student grants (administration of units by the beneficiary).

The purchase of hardware (laptop, PC, mouse, keyboard) that is intended for personal use is not an eligible item. Hardware that is directly linked to the research/project objectives or directly related to the project objective, e.g. to ensure the safety of work on the project in the laboratory, the efficiency of work on the project in the laboratory, etc., is an eligible item. In this case, the hardware can be purchased as small equipment.

5. VSB-TUO must allow the applicant for a student grant to submit an application in the maximum possible financial amount allowed by the unit (i.e. CZK 7 986 per 0.1 of full-time/month/researcher) in the appropriate multiple of the total work capacity of all researchers and the planned duration of the student grant.

6. Overheads are set at 15% of the DGS student project budget.

7. In the case of a planned educational/research activity abroad (e.g. internship, summer school, research stay, active participation in a conference), the researcher shall state in the project proposal its purpose, date, time and place of stay, and justify direct connection of the foreign trip with the DGS project. There is no limit to the duration of the educational/research activity abroad. Each researcher with a work capacity of 0.3 of full-time and higher must carry out at least one educational/research activity abroad during the implementation of the DGS student grant unless an unforeseen event or exceptional situation occurs due to force majeure. These activities can be implemented in the EU and outside the EU.

8. This does not affect the right of the DGS Expert Panel to request from the student modifications of the grant in connection with the results of the evaluation. However, in the case of reducing the budget of student grants in the process of their evaluation, it is not possible to reduce the personnel costs for the researcher below the minimum level of personnel costs set in the unit.

9. It is not allowed to increase the total budget of the student grant after its award. This does not affect the researcher's ability to submit a follow-up DGS project.

10. The principal investigator has the option of suspending the implementation of the student grant in the event that he does not implement the grant in a given month, therefore he does not claim any costs and does not submit a Monthly Activity Report. In such a case, the DGS Expert Panel may decide to extend the duration of the DGS student grant, thus enabling the researchers to exhaust the unused capacity.

11. The results achieved from the DGS support must be linked to the objectives of the OP RDE project and must have the stated commitment to this project.

Article 12

Changes in the implementation of the DGS project

1. Changes in the implementation of the DGS project are distinguished into significant changes and minor changes.

2. A significant change is considered to be a change of principal investigator, a change of co-investigator, a change of mentor, a suspension of the DGS project and an extension of the duration of the student grant, significant partial changes in the direction of the student project and a transfer of funds in budget items above 20% of the budget item. A request for a significant change is submitted by the principal investigator with the mentor's approval to the DGS Expert Guarantor.
3. A minor change is considered to be, in particular, a transfer of funds in budget items up to 20% of a given budget item, a change in the destination and duration of the educational/research activity abroad, a change in the planned educational activity and other changes not explicitly mentioned in these Regulations. It is sufficient to justify a minor change in the Monthly Activity Report or the Final Activity Report, as appropriate.
4. The transfer of funds within the DGS budget lines is possible according to the following rules. It is not possible to transfer funds from personal expenses (i.e. scholarships). In the case of a transfer of funds in budget items up to 20% of the amount of the budget item, this is a minor change and it is sufficient to justify the change in the Monthly Activity Report or the Final Activity Report, as appropriate. If the amount exceeds 20% of the budget line, it is a significant change and a Request for Transfer of Funds between budget lines should be written and submitted by the principal investigator to the DGS Expert Guarantor with the mentor's approval.
5. In case the principal investigator cannot continue the implementation of the DGS student grant, this student grant may be interrupted upon the request of the principal investigator and with the consent of the mentor and extended upon approval of the DGS Expert Panel so that it can be completed at a later date, but no later than 28th February 2023. In case this is not possible, the implementation of the student grant is terminated. In the case of early termination of the student grant, the principal investigator shall submit a Final Activity Report summarising the results to date, which is a condition for the payment of a scholarship for the last month of the student grant to all members of the research team.

Article 13

Completion of the DGS Student Grant Project

The DGS student grant will be financially and materially terminated at the end of the project. After the completion of the DGS project, a Final Activity Report must be submitted by the principal investigator in the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system (<https://grantové.soutěže.vsb.cz>) no later than 25th February of the same year. Subsequently, the DGS Expert Guarantor, after consultation with the Expert Panel, will evaluate the success of the student grant implementation in the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system (<https://grantové.soutěže.vsb.cz>) by 30th April of the same year and confirm its successful completion, which will be forwarded to the OP RDE principal investigator for approval. After the evaluation of the student grant in the VSB-TUO Grant Competition information system (<https://grantové.soutěže.vsb.cz>), this DGS project will be locked. In the event that the result of the DGS project requires the protection of intellectual property, the principal investigator is obliged to proceed

in accordance with the valid Rector's Guidelines TUO_SME_06_002 - Protection of Intellectual Property at VSB-TUO.

In Ostrava on 1st October 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'V' followed by a smaller 'á' and a final flourish.

prof. RNDr. Václav Snášel, CSc.
Rector VSB-TUO

