

HANDBOOK

Science Fund of Landspítali

2027



Contents

1 Rules and guidelines for applicants 4
1.1 Types of grants 4
1.1.1 Incentive Grants 4
1.1.2 General Research Grants 4
1.2 Eligible costs 4
1.2.1 Salaries 4
1.2.2 Operating expenses and purchased services 5
2 Application and supporting documents 6
2.1 Online application form 6
2.2 Project description and references (in English) 6
2.3 CV (in English) 7
2.4 Notification to the Research Manager 7
3 Processing of applications 8
3.1 Pre-screening 8
3.2 Expert assessment of applications 8
3.3 Decision on awarding grants 8
4 Grant awards: contracts, payments and administration 9
4.1.1 Contracts 9
4.1.2 Distribution of annual payments for funded projects 9
4.1.3 Reports 9
5 Guidelines for Expert Panel members 10
5.1 Online assessment system 10
5.2 The assessment process 10
5.3 Expert Panel meetings 11
6 General information 12
6.1 Board of the Science Fund of Landspítali 12
6.2 Expert Panel of the Science Fund of Landspítali 12
6.3 General enquiries 12
6.4 Code of ethics for administrators 12
6.5 Rules on disqualification 12
6.6 Obtaining the required approvals and the applicant's code of ethics 13
6.7 Misconduct 13
6.8 Open access publication 13
6.9 Data management 14

Foreword

This is the Handbook of the Science Fund of Landspítali for applicants and the Expert Panel, and it applies to the 2027 grant year. Its aim is to increase the transparency of the allocation process for all stakeholders, from the announcement of the application deadline to the awarding of grants and the administration of awarded grants. The Handbook contains the Fund's rules and useful information, including the rights and obligations of grant recipients. The Handbook is published annually in connection with the advertised application deadline. To ensure that the Handbook fulfils its purpose, everyone involved in the process (applicants and Expert Panel members) is encouraged to read it in full.

Role

The Science Fund of Landspítali supports research projects carried out by Landspítali staff. For this purpose, the Fund awards grants for up to three years for ambitious scientific research. The Fund does not support projects classified as quality improvement projects.

Timeline

The Science Fund of Landspítali awards grants in the spring each year. The application deadline is advertised at least six weeks in advance. The planned timeline for the application and assessment process for the grant year.

Tafla 1. Estimated timeline for Grant Year
15 October 2026
1 December 2026
April 2027

Who can apply for grants

Main conditions for awarding grants:

- The application complies with the general guidelines and rules for awarding grants from the Science Fund of Landspítali.
- The required approvals from the relevant ethics committee(s) or other reviewing bodies must be in place when the contract is signed.
- The principal applicant is a permanent employee of Landspítali with an appointment of at least 30%.
- The application includes an updated CV and publication list for the principal applicant(s).
- All requested information must accompany the application. Applications that do not meet the rules or conditions of the Science Fund of Landspítali will be rejected.

Useful information:

- Only one grant is available for each research project.
- A principal applicant may submit a maximum of two grant applications, for two different projects.
- A principal applicant may hold a maximum of two active grants at any given time, only one of which may be an Incentive Grant.
- For BSc, MSc or doctoral student projects, the supervisor is generally the principal applicant.
- The Fund does not support research or parts of research that have already been completed.
- If a new grant is sought for a project that has previously received a grant from the Fund, that project must be completed and the final report submitted.

1 Rules and guidelines for applicants

1.1 TYPES OF GRANTS

1.1.1 Incentive Grants

Incentive Grants are intended for ambitious research projects with high scientific value and novelty by international standards, whose results are likely to be published in prestigious international peer-reviewed journals.

To apply for an Incentive Grant, the principal applicant must have published at least five scientific articles in recognised international peer-reviewed journals as the first or last author.

Incentive Grants are awarded for up to three years, with a maximum amount of ISK 18 million, or ISK 6 million per year.

If an application for an Incentive Grant is unsuccessful, the project is automatically transferred to an application for a General Research Grant.

1.1.2 General Research Grants

General Research Grants are intended for ambitious research projects with high scientific value and novelty by international standards, whose results are likely to be published in prestigious international peer-reviewed journals.

To apply for a Research Grant, the principal applicant must have published at least two scientific articles in recognised peer-reviewed journals as the first or last author.

Research Grants are awarded for up to three years, with a maximum amount of ISK 6 million, or ISK 2 million per year.

1.2 ELIGIBLE COSTS

Costs of salaries, operating expenses and purchased services are eligible. No matching contribution is required.

1.2.1 Salaries

The Fund supports salary costs for assistants hired to assist with carrying out the project and salaries for students participating in the project.

Salaries shall be based on regular daytime pay under the applicable collective agreement for the relevant occupational group, plus a 25% supplement for salary-related charges. The Fund does not support overtime payments or payments that cause the individual's earnings to exceed those of a 100% daytime position, whether from research projects or other work.

If a Landspítali employee hired for the project intends to take unpaid leave to work on it, the approval and confirmation of the relevant supervisor are required.

Confirmation of unpaid leave: The applicant shall provide the name and email address of the supervisor authorised to approve the leave. After the application deadline, the relevant supervisor will receive a notification that unpaid leave is requested if the employee is awarded a grant.

The Science Fund does not support payments to other institutions or companies.

1.2.2 Operating expenses and purchased services

Funding may be requested for the costs of necessary supplies and expert assistance for the project.

If costs relate to access to equipment outside Landspítali, a quotation must be included.

All operating expenses must be explained and itemised in the relevant fields of the application form.

The Science Fund does not support the costs of publishing articles, printing theses, proofreading manuscripts/theses, travel and/or conference costs, or other costs associated with disseminating research results. The Fund does not support the purchase of laboratory equipment or other equipment, such as computers or other items normally provided by Landspítali.

A grant may be sought from the Landspítali Publication Fund for the publication of articles. Researchers are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with the open access publishing agreements negotiated by Landspítali/the National and University Library of Iceland.

2 Application and supporting documents

2.1 ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

Applications are accepted only through the Rannís online application system.

The application and supporting documents shall be submitted in English.

2.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCES (IN ENGLISH)

The project description shall be submitted using the Fund's template, which is available in the online application system. Please note that the template may change from year to year. To ensure equal treatment of all applicants, applications that do not use the correct template will be rejected; this also applies if the template has been altered. Such rejection may occur at any stage of the assessment process.

The expert assessment of an application is based solely on the information provided in the application and supporting documents. No documents are accepted after the application deadline. Applications that do not use the correct template for the project description will be rejected. Such rejection may occur at any stage of the assessment process.

Applications must meet all eligibility conditions to receive an expert assessment. If it becomes apparent during the assessment process that one or more conditions have not been met, the application will be removed from the assessment process.

Template for the project description and references (in English)

The designated form (template) available in the application system must be used for the project description.

The template uses 12-point Times/Times New Roman font, 1.5 line spacing and 2.5 cm margins.

The project description is divided into the following sections, which must not be changed:

a) Project objectives, research questions/hypotheses, feasibility, novelty and impact
b) Current state of knowledge in the field
c) Research plan and outputs (timeline and work plan, methods, milestones, current status of the project, etc.). Reference may be made to descriptions of milestones and outputs in the online application system (section 3.2 Work Packages).
d) Project management and collaboration
e) Planned publication of results

To ensure equal treatment of all applicants, applications that do not use the correct form and template will be rejected.

Before the project description is uploaded to the application system, the references are removed and placed in a separate document. These two documents are uploaded separately as PDF files. The application system counts the pages in the project description but not in the references. The project description may be no more than 5 pages for Research Grants and 7 pages for Incentive Grants. A cover page and an instructions page are added to the project description, so the application system permits the upload of PDF files of 7 and 9 pages, respectively.

2.3 CV (IN ENGLISH)

The CV shall be concise and no more than four pages long. A link may be provided to a website listing publications, such as ORCID.

The CV shall include information on:

- the applicant's current position
- education and training
- previous positions and awards
- up to five published articles or book chapters relevant to the project
- an overview of research grants awarded over the past 10 years

2.4 NOTIFICATION TO THE RESEARCH MANAGER

When an application is submitted through the application system, the Research Manager at Landspítali receives the title and number of the application, together with the name of the principal applicant. The Director of Research confirms the principal applicant's percentage appointment at Landspítali and sends this information to Rannís.

3 Processing of applications

Applicants are encouraged to read Chapters 3 to 5, covering the application assessment process and guidelines for Expert Panel members, which outline the assessment criteria used by the Expert Panel.

3.1 PRE-SCREENING

Applications are pre-screened by the Fund's administrators at Rannís. Incomplete applications and applications that do not comply with the Fund's rules are rejected without further assessment, and the applicant is notified accordingly.

The main reasons for rejection are (the list is not exhaustive):

- Incomplete application
- The correct project description template has not been used
- The project description template has been altered
- The application or supporting documents are not in English
- The principal applicant does not meet the Fund's conditions
- The applicant has discussed their application with the Board of the Science Fund
- Suspected misconduct

3.2 EXPERT ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Valid applications are assessed by two Expert Panel members. The Expert Panel provides a reasoned written assessment of each application and assigns a final score based on the expert assessment (see the chapter on Guidelines for Expert Panel members).

3.3 DECISION ON AWARDING GRANTS

The Board of the Science Fund of Landspítali decides on the allocation of grants. Applications receiving scores of 5, 6 or 7 have priority for funding. The Board seeks advice beyond that available from the Fund's Expert Panel if necessary. In addition to the expert assessment provided by the Expert Panel, the Board shall base its deliberations on the Fund's general priorities and allocation policy, approved by the Landspítali Science Council, and on the financial contributions to the Fund. Once the allocation has been decided, applicants receive a decision letter with the Expert Panel's final assessment.

The decision of the Board of the Science Fund of Landspítali on awarding grants from the Fund is final.

4 Grant awards: contracts, payments and administration

4.1.1 Contracts

Contracts are concluded between the principal applicant and Rannís, on behalf of the Board of the Science Fund of Landspítali. The principal applicant shall finalise the contract within three months in the year in which the grant award is announced. Grants are paid only into bank accounts administered by Landspítali.

4.1.2 Distribution of annual payments for funded projects

A contract is concluded for each grant year, and a new contract is signed when the annual report has been approved.

Payments are distributed as follows:

- Grant year one: 100% upon signing the contract
- Grant year two: 100% when the annual report for grant year one has been approved
- Grant year three: 80% when the annual report for grant year two has been approved and 20% when the final report has been approved

4.1.3 Reports

Annual and final reports shall describe the progress of the project, and changes to the research plan must be justified. The financial report shall set out the costs incurred, reflecting the use of the grant.

The Fund's staff may request further information and explanations from grant recipients and consult the relevant Expert Panel if necessary. If a report is not approved, the Board of the Fund may terminate the contract with the grant recipient. If a grant has not been used in accordance with the application, it shall be repaid to the Fund.

Templates for annual and final reports can be found on the Fund's website at Rannís.

The principal applicant is responsible for submitting annual reports after the end of each grant year, no later than the application deadline for new grants, and a final report no later than 1 June after the end of the final grant year. If a new grant is applied for, that grant will not be paid until the final report for the previous project has been received and approved, no later than October of that year.

General questions contracts, payments and administration of the Fund shall be directed to them at **visindasjodurlsh@rannis.is**.

5 Guidelines for Expert Panel members

The role of the Fund's Expert Panel is to assess applications on the basis of the scientific value of the projects, the applicants' competence and facilities for carrying out the work, and the likelihood that the project will deliver measurable results and benefits. The Expert Panel provides a written assessment of each application and assigns a score based on the expert assessment.

5.1 ONLINE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Expert Panel members are given access to the Fund's online assessment system. It contains all applications submitted to the Fund, supporting documents and the Expert Panel's assessment form. To obtain full access to the documents, an Expert Panel member must first accept a confidentiality declaration and mark the applications they are disqualified from assessing. Expert Panel members do not have access to the supporting documents of applications they are disqualified from assessing.

5.2 THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications received by the Expert Panel are allocated among its members. Two Expert Panel members are assigned to each application, but all Expert Panel members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with all applications.

Once all applications have been assessed by the Expert Panel's readers, draft Expert Panel assessments are written. The Expert Panel then meets. Applicants are sent the Expert Panel's assessment once the Board of the Fund has decided on the annual allocation.

Assessment criteria

The criteria underlying the scoring are scientific value and novelty, implementation of the project, and the scientific or societal impact of the project. The weighting and scope of each assessment criterion are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Assessment criteria and their weighting in the overall assessment	
Scientific value and novelty	**45%**
Scientific value of the application	15%
Novelty of the project	15%
Clarity of objectives and research questions	15%
Implementation	**45%**
Quality and feasibility of the research plan	15%
Feasibility of the methods	15%
Knowledge and experience of the applicants	15%
Impact	**10%**
Scientific and/or societal impact of the project	10%

5.3 EXPERT PANEL MEETINGS

Before Expert Panel meetings

Two Expert Panel members write a review and assessment of each application in the online assessment system. Taking account of the reviews by the Expert Panel's readers, the first reader prepares a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the applications for which they are responsible.

During Expert Panel meetings

Expert Panel members who have declared themselves disqualified from assessing an application leave the meeting room when that application is discussed, and this is documented in the minutes kept by the Expert Panel administrator. At Expert Panel meetings, the first reader presents the application and their own review. The second reader then presents their comments, and the Expert Panel discusses the assessment and finalises its review. The review shall be constructive and prepared in a way that is as useful as possible to the applicant.

Once the Expert Panel has discussed all applications, they are prioritised on the basis of strength categories, and a score is assigned in accordance with the Expert Panel's overall assessment. A separate list is prepared for each grant type. The strength categories range from 1 to 7, with category 7 reserved for outstanding applications (Table 3).

Table 3. Grading scale for Expert Panel

7	**Outstanding** Exceptionally strong application with negligible weaknesses
6	**Excellent** Very strong application with only minor weaknesses
5	**Very good** Strong application, generally well-designed Some weaknesses, but overall merits outweigh shortcomings
4	**Good** Reasonable quality, but with clear weaknesses Scientific contribution or novelty is moderate
3	**Fair** Some merits, but several significant weaknesses Limited impact and competitiveness
2	**Weak** Major weaknesses in design, feasibility, or impact Low scientific quality
1	**Poor** Very serious flaws

6 General information

6.1 Board of the Science Fund of Landspítali

The Board of the Fund approves the allocation rules and guidelines set out in the Fund's Handbook. The Board makes decisions on funding from the Fund after receiving the Expert Panel's assessments.

6.2 Expert Panel of the Science Fund of Landspítali

The Expert Panel reviews applications submitted to the Fund. The Expert Panel is appointed by the Fund's specialists at Rannís with the approval of the Board of the Science Fund. The Expert Panel consists of active researchers outside Iceland with qualifications at least equivalent to those of an associate professor and extensive research experience, selected for their expertise in health and life sciences and clinical research. When appointing Expert Panels, attention is paid to breadth of expertise and to achieving as balanced a gender ratio as possible.

6.3 General enquiries

The Fund's specialists at Rannís provide information and assistance on working days from 09:00 to 15:00. General questions concerning the Fund and applications undergoing assessment shall be directed to them at **visindasjodurlsh@rannis.is**.

6.4 Code of ethics for administrators

Members of the Board of the Science Fund, the Science Council, members of the Fund's Expert Panels, the Fund's specialists and others involved in administering applications to the Fund are bound by strict confidentiality. All applications, their supporting documents and assessment forms are treated as confidential. These confidential documents may not be used for any purpose other than expert assessment and may not be disclosed, published or otherwise shown to a third party. Copies of these confidential documents shall be made only if considered necessary for expert assessment. Once the assessment process is complete, the application and assessment forms shall be retained in the Rannís electronic archive. The Fund's Expert Panel is aware that the disclosure or unlawful use of confidential information may cause irreparable harm to its owners. The owner of confidential information is entitled to apply to a court with jurisdiction over the matter and request specific measures, seek an injunction against further disclosure or other breaches, and/or make other claims that the owner considers appropriate. This right of the owner is additional to the remedies available to the registered owner or a person deriving rights from them (the beneficial owner).

Applicants also have the opportunity to use the services of Auðna Tæknitorg for their projects, and Auðna's representatives are bound by strict confidentiality, as are others involved in administering applications to the Fund. A confidentiality declaration to this effect has been signed by Landspítali and Auðna.

6.5 Rules on disqualification

The general grounds for disqualification under the Administrative Procedures Act (No. 37/1993) apply to the Science Fund of Landspítali. Those participating in the Fund's assessment process are responsible for identifying circumstances that disqualify them.

Expert Panel and Board members shall be considered disqualified if any of the following apply:

A. Close friendship, family ties or a relationship by marriage with an applicant.

B. Personal animosity towards an applicant.
C. Professional competition or close collaboration with an applicant.
D. Other reasons that could prevent the utmost impartiality in assessment or other decisions concerning the allocation of grants.

The consequences of disqualification are as follows:

- If a Board member or Expert Panel member is a party to an application, they must withdraw from the Board or Expert Panel.
- An Expert Panel member who is disqualified in relation to a particular application shall leave the meeting when that application is discussed. This is recorded in the minutes. In addition, the member is not given access to the application in the online application system.
- If a Board member is disqualified in relation to a particular application, they must withdraw from deliberations on the allocation for the relevant grant year, and an alternate is called in.

If the Board member or Expert Panel member concerned is an employee of an institution or legal entity and an application from the same institution or legal entity is under consideration, the closeness of their relationship with the staff involved in the application and/or the management of the relevant institution must be assessed. Such relationships do not necessarily lead to disqualification.

Members of the Board of the Science Fund, representatives of the Science Council and Expert Panel members are responsible for identifying circumstances that disqualify them from considering applications to the Fund.

6.6 OBTAINING THE REQUIRED APPROVALS AND THE APPLICANT'S CODE OF ETHICS

The applicant shall state in the application whether the research project includes aspects that require special consideration in relation to general ethical principles. In such cases, these aspects and how they will be addressed must be explained. The relevant approvals from ethics committees and other reviewing bodies must be in place when the contract is signed.

Applicants must comply with international rules and conventions where applicable, for example concerning the handling of biological samples and the use of patents.

6.7 MISCONDUCT

If misconduct, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misuse is suspected in connection with an application during the application process, or a funded project during or after the funding period, the institution concerned and the Board of the Fund will be notified without exception.

If such suspicions arise during the assessment process, the application will be withdrawn from the process while the applicant's institution is given an opportunity to investigate whether the suspicions are justified. If everything is found to be in order, the application will be returned to the assessment process. If misconduct is established, the application will be rejected from assessment, and the applicant's institution will be held responsible for taking appropriate measures.

The Board of the Fund may also initiate an independent investigation into allegations of misconduct.

6.8 OPEN ACCESS PUBLICATION

Under the Act on Public Support for Scientific Research No. 3/2003, as amended, efforts shall be made to publish the results of research financed with public funds in open access.

Grant recipients shall acknowledge the Science Fund of Landspítali and the grant number in all publications of results: “This research was supported by the Science Fund of Landspítali, grant number...” In English: “This work was supported by the Landspitali Science Fund, grant number...”.

Researchers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the open access publishing agreements negotiated by Landspítali/the National and University Library of Iceland.

6.9 DATA MANAGEMENT

The application shall state, as applicable, how data will be stored and made accessible. The storage and accessibility of tools, software or algorithms collected or developed in the project shall be described in accordance with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable).

For projects awarded funding, a data management plan shall be submitted, as applicable, that complies with international standards, i.e. the FAIR principles, Act No. 90/2018 on Data Protection and the Processing of Personal Data, European Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and ethical principles for data management.