

Conditions and Procedure for applying for and processing support for ERC interview training

1. Scope of application

- 1.1. These arrangements establish the conditions and procedures for applying for, processing, and allocating support for participation in the ERC interview training.
- 1.2. The preparation and amendment of this procedure, as well as the coordination of the allocation of the support stipulated herein, is managed by the Estonian Research Council (hereinafter ETAG).
- 1.3. The support indicated in this guide is financed from the programme "Supporting the internationalisation of R&D: connecting to the international knowledge market" (hereinafter Mobilitas 3.0), approved by the Directive of the Minister of Education and Research no. 1.1-2/23/291 of 26.10.2023.

2. Goal

The aim of the ERC interview training is to support researchers who have reached the interview stage in the ERC application round in preparing for their interviews.

3. Definitions

The European Research Council (ERC) – the European Union research funding institution that supports frontier science and fresh scientific reflections in new scientific fields with a novel and innovative approach. The mission of the ERC is to support excellent science in Europe, to achieve this objective, the Scientific Council awards five types of grants, open to researchers from all scientific fields, with scientific excellence as the sole evaluation criterion.

ERC interview training - the training is intended for employees of research and development institutions who have reached the second, i.e., interview stage of the ERC. The goal is to increase the success rate of ERC grant applicants by developing the specific knowledge and skills needed for the interview.

4. Eligibility period

- 4.1. The support is available until 31 December 2028.

5. Requirements for participants in the ERC interview training

- 5.1. Support can be applied for by positively evaluated research and development institutions, higher education institutions, private or public sector institutions registered in Estonia (hereinafter referred to as the institution), where the researcher works during the ERC interview training.
- 5.2. The institution may apply for support for a researcher who has submitted an ERC grant application, progressed to the interview stage, and has completed ERC interview training

conducted by a training institution or trainer with expertise in evaluating ERC applications.

- 5.3. ERC interview training must take place within the ongoing ERC application round.
- 5.4. It is not possible to apply for support to a researcher who is receiving support from Mobilitas 3.0 activity 2.1. "Increasing the success of applying for an ERC grant".
- 5.5. Within one ERC grant application round, the institution may apply for interview training once per researcher.

6. Applying for support and reimbursement of expenses

- 6.1. The application for ERC interview training support is ongoing and based on the principle of expense reimbursement.
- 6.2. To apply for support related to participation in ERC interview training, the institution must submit a reimbursement claim to ETAG no later than one month after the training, using the provided form (Appendix 2) and including relevant copies of payment documents, to the address etag@etag.ee. The reimbursement claim must include an official ERC interview invitation as an additional file attachment.
- 6.3. Eligible expenses may include:
 - 6.3.1. Training participation costs, including trainer fees.
 - 6.3.2. Travel expenses related to the training (accommodation, travel, travel insurance, and per diem for international travel), excluding domestic travel in Estonia.
- 6.4. ETAG may request explanations and additional documents from the institution and the participant in the ERC interview training regarding the submitted data if it finds that the reimbursement claim for ERC interview training expenses, along with relevant copies of payment documents, is not sufficiently clear or has deficiencies, indicating which circumstances require further clarification, supplementation, or additional information.

7. Amount of support

- 7.1. ETAG reimburses ERC interview training expenses up to €500 per participant.

8. De minimis aid

- 8.1. Support shall be granted to the undertaking in the form of de minimis aid. An entrepreneur is a person or institution that is engaged in economic activity, that is, offers goods or services on the market.
- 8.2. De minimis aid is granted in accordance with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (hereinafter the VTA Regulation) (OJ L, 2023/2831, 15.12.2023) and § 33 of the Competition Act.
- 8.3. The total amount of de minimis aid granted to anyone undertaking may not exceed EUR 300 000 over any period of three years. Where de minimis aid has been or will be granted to one undertaking under different Commission de minimis regulations, de minimis aid granted under other regulations must also be considered. The undertakings referred to in Article 2(2) of the VTA Regulation shall be considered as a single undertaking.

8.4. If the de minimis ceiling is reached, the aid application will be rejected.