

Pursuant to Article 29 of the Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 186/21), the Decree on the scientific research funding from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 35/22), and subject to prior consent from the Senate, the Governing Board of the University of Nova Gorica (UNG) adopted on 29/06/2022 the following

## **RULES ON SELECTION AND FUNDING OF YOUNG RESEARCHERS at the University of Nova Gorica**

### **Article 1 Introductory provision**

The Rules on selection and funding of young researchers (hereinafter: the Rules) provide for the basis for financing young researchers through the determination of the number and procedure for the appointment of mentors and young researchers, the training programme, the criteria, the method of evaluation and the selection of candidates for young researchers.

The method of determining the number of mentor positions per research programme shall be set out in the University of Nova Gorica-Young Researcher (UNG-YR) Methodology adopted by the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica (hereinafter: the UNG Senate).

The University of Nova Gorica (hereinafter: UNG) shall select candidates for young researchers in accordance with the regulations governing recruitment, its internal general acts and the conditions laid down in these Rules.

The main entities below are written in masculine grammatical form in the Slovene language version of this text, but apply equally to both genders.

### **Article 2**

#### **Appointment and tasks of the committee for the selection of mentors and monitoring of young researchers**

The committee for the selection and monitoring of young researchers (hereinafter: the committee) shall be composed of three members whose academic title should be at least associate professor.

The committee shall have a broad representation from humanities and natural sciences.

The members of the committee shall be appointed by the UNG Senate for a three-year term.

The tasks of the committee:

- Determine the number of mentor positions per research programme and the number of junior mentors in accordance with the UNG-YR Methodology;
- Prepare and approve a call for mentor candidates;
- Verify the fulfilment of conditions by the proposed mentor candidates; the fulfilment of conditions shall also be verified in the event of changing the mentors of young researchers who are already employed;
- Approve the proposed mentor candidates;

- Prepare a proposal for the distribution of funds in accordance with the UNG-YR Methodology, taking into account the number of young researchers per organisational unit for carrying out research activities and the current price category of the research programme to be submitted to the UNG Senate and the UNG Governing Board for approval.

### **Article 3**

#### **Call for mentor candidates**

Following the approval by the committee, the UNG rectorate's administration unit shall submit, by the end of the year at the latest, a call for proposals for mentor candidates for the following year to the heads of organisational units for carrying out research activity.

On the basis of the call for proposals, the heads of organisational units for carrying out research activity invite the heads of research programmes to submit proposals for mentors, whereby they should also ensure a gender balance. At least one quarter of all mentors of young researchers at UNG should be young mentors, as defined in Article 4 of the Rules.

The heads of the organisational units for carrying out research activity shall send a list of mentor candidates to the UNG rectorate's administration unit within the time limit set out in the call for proposals. A mandatory annex to this list shall be the consent of the mentor and the head of the research programme for each mentor candidate separately. If the organisational unit for carrying out research activity is not in a position to propose an adequate number of junior mentors or ensure a gender balance among the proposed candidates, the list shall be accompanied by an explanation. If the committee concludes that the explanation is inadequate, the head shall be invited to provide further clarification or to submit another, adequate proposal.

The committee shall discuss the proposals of the heads, also taking into account the maximum number of mentorships of young researchers per mentor. Once the list of mentors has been approved by the committee, the Rector shall issue a decision on the selection of mentors for the entire UNG and inform the UNG Senate thereof.

After the decision on the selection of the mentors has been issued, the HR officer shall ask the heads to request the mentors to prepare job descriptions for the young researchers on the prescribed forms.

### **Article 4**

#### **Conditions for being a mentor of a young researcher**

The conditions to be fulfilled to become a mentor of a young researcher:

- An employee at UNG,
- A member of the research programme on which a young researcher is to be working,
- Meeting the conditions for a fundamental research project leader,
- At least four years have elapsed since the prospective mentor's doctoral thesis has been defended (the year of the defence shall be taken into account).

To ensure quality, a mentor may not train more than three young researchers at the same time. All young researchers, including those whose status as a young researcher is suspended due to parental leave or prolonged illness, shall be accounted for under the quota of young researchers. Researchers who are enrolled in a doctoral programme and mentored in their studies by the candidate should also be accounted for under the quota, though they are not employed at UNG as young researchers but are funded from other sources.

The conditions for a junior mentor include:

- No more than ten years have elapsed since the year in which the first doctorate was defended, and
- No more than fifteen years have elapsed since the year of completion of the second cycle programme or a comparable study programme abroad.

If the junior mentor has taken parental leave of at least six months for each child since the completion of the second cycle programme, the time after the year of the defence of the first doctorate or the time after the completion of the second cycle programme shall be extended by one year. The same applies in the case of absence due to a long-term illness of at least six months.

## **Article 5**

### **Public tender for young researchers**

UNG shall publish a public tender for young researcher candidates (hereinafter: the tender) on its website and at the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia on 15 March each year, or on the first following working day if that day is a public holiday.

The tender shall set out the details of the application and selection process for young researchers. The notice of the tender shall include:

- A legal basis for carrying out the tender,
- Launching date and duration of the tender,
- Subject of the tender,
- Number of vacancies for mentors, including job descriptions,
- Conditions to be met by a candidate for a young researcher,
- Criteria for the assessment of young researcher candidates,
- Funding period,
- How to apply and the deadline for the submission of applications,
- Candidate selection process.

## **Article 6**

### **Conditions and criteria for the selection of young researcher candidates**

Conditions for the selection of a young researcher candidate:

- Has not yet completed a doctorate in science or obtained the title of doctor of science;
- Has not yet been employed as a young researcher;
- No more than four years have elapsed since the year of completion of their second cycle programme of study or the programme of study leading to eligibility for admission to the doctoral programme.

Criteria for the evaluation and selection of young researcher candidates:

- Assessment of the interview with the candidate (up to 5 points);
- Published papers (up to 3 points);
- Participation in research work (up to 3 points);
- Awards or recognitions received (up to 1 point);
- The average grade of the second cycle study programme or the study programme which qualifies the candidate for admission to the doctoral programme (1 point for an average grade between 9 and 10 inclusive and 0.5 point for an average grade between 8 and 8.99 inclusive).

## **Article 7**

### **Selection procedure for young researcher candidates**

A proposal for the selection of young researchers shall be made in accordance with these Rules by the heads of organisational units for carrying out research activity. A young researcher shall be proposed by the mentor.

On the basis of a proposal from the heads of the organisational units for carrying out research activity the Rector shall issue decisions to the selected candidates for young researchers.

The selected young researchers not having completed their second cycle studies when applying to the tender must complete their studies by 15 September at the latest.

## **Article 8**

### **Training programme**

The training programme consists of research and study work, including:

- Motivation for research, description of the progress of research work, its objectives and integration of the topic into the research programme;
- Name of the research programme in which the young researcher is or will be involved;
- Name of the doctoral study programme in which the candidate is enrolled;
- A list of elective courses.

The mentor shall submit the training programme to the head of the organisational unit, who shall approve it before the conclusion of the contract of employment. The training programme shall be signed by the mentor and the young researcher and kept in the HR department.

## **Article 9**

### **Employment contract**

UNG shall conclude employment contracts with the selected young researcher candidates.

Young researchers, if they fulfil the relevant conditions, may work two teaching hours per week or up to a total of eight hours of assistantship per week in the relevant field of expertise, in accordance with the collective agreement governing the research activity.

## **Article 10**

### **Young researcher funding**

A young researcher is eligible for funding if the following conditions are met:

- A full-time employee of UNG;
- A member of the same research programme as their mentor.

The funding of training for young researchers is scheduled to start on 1 October each year. Young researchers' training shall be funded until they have obtained a PhD or for a maximum of four years.

UNG shall shorten the funding period referred to in the previous paragraph by one year if the young researcher is enrolled in the second year of a third-level study programme at the time of signing the contract, and by two years if the young researcher is enrolled in the third year of a third-level study programme.

The young researcher's funding shall cease for the time they are absent from work while they are funded by the state on another basis under the relevant legislation (e.g.: absence due to non-work-related injury or illness of more than 20 working days; leave under parental leave insurance, etc.).

Young researchers must successfully defend their doctoral dissertation no later than one year after the end of funding of their training.

## **Article 11**

### **Procedure for appointment to the title of assistant**

A young researcher shall apply for appointment to the title of assistant within five days of receipt of the decision on the selection of a young researcher. The decision on the appointment to the title of young researcher shall be made by the UNG Senate until the beginning of the funding of the training.

Prior to the beginning of the funding of the training, the young researcher shall obtain the appropriate habilitation title referred to in the first paragraph of this Article.

## **Article 12**

### **Training of young researchers abroad**

Young researchers may be enabled to carry out their training at foreign universities or research institutes. In this case, the funding of young researchers remains unchanged, even if a young researcher has obtained a foreign grant for the duration of their stay abroad.

Training abroad is not a reason to extend the deadline for completion of the young researcher's studies.

**Article 13**  
**Keeping records of young researchers**

Records of young researchers who are both employees and students at UNG are kept by the relevant departments in accordance with education and labour legislation.  
The use of funds is recorded in the accounting records under separate accounting headings.

**Article 14**  
**Changing a mentor**

A mentor or a young researcher may request a change of mentor.

The application for changing a mentor, including a justification and signed by the young researcher, the current and new mentor, the head of the research programme and the dean of the Graduate School, shall be submitted by the head of the research unit to the HR officer at UNG.

A committee shall verify the fulfilment of the conditions of the new mentor and adopt a draft decision on changing the mentor.

If a young researcher proposes to switch a mentor but the mentor disagrees, the young researcher shall prepare a justification for the request to change the mentor and submit it to the committee. The committee shall consider the merits of the request and, if it is justified, instruct the head of the research unit, in agreement with the head of the research programme, to assign a new mentor to the young researcher. If no agreement is reached between the head of the research unit and the head of the research programme, the decision shall be taken by the Senate.

If the mentor is the head of the research unit, the Rector shall appoint the mentor after discussion with the members of the same or another research programme.

**Article 15**  
**Unused funds**

Funds allocated for the training of young researchers that are not used due to the suspension of funding (e.g.: absence due to non-work-related injury or illness of more than 20 days; parental leave, etc.), or due to early completion of studies, shall remain available to the research programme for the purpose of paying the salaries of young researchers after the end of the suspension, the awards to young researchers, for the purchase of equipment or covering material costs, and shall be used within a maximum of two financial years.

**Article 16**  
**Changes to young researcher funding**

In the event of a change of mentor and a change of research programme, the Rector shall issue a decision on the transfer of funding to another research programme.

A young researcher's employment is terminated:

- If it is established that the conditions for entering into an employment contract are not (or were not) fulfilled,
- In the cases provided for by labour law.

In cases of early termination of employment a young researcher shall be obliged to reimburse UNG for the funds paid by UNG for the fees for their doctoral studies up to the date of termination of the contract, unless the termination of employment occurred within the first three months after the start of the training, or if UNG decides otherwise.

The young researcher shall also be obliged to reimburse UNG for the funds referred to in the third paragraph of this Article if they do not complete their doctoral studies within one year at the latest after the end of the funding of the training, unless UNG decides otherwise.

A request for the termination of training may also be made by a mentor as a result of non-compliance with the young researcher's obligations. The mentor shall inform the Rector of UNG of the justification for and the proposal to discontinue the training. The Rector of UNG shall forward the proposal to terminate the young researcher's training, along with the mentor's justification, to the committee.

The committee shall consider the mentor's request as soon as possible and adopt a reasoned decision on its findings and inform the Rector thereof without delay. If the committee finds that the mentor's request is justified, it shall issue a decision terminating the training due to the non-compliance with the obligations.

The funds returned by the young researcher to UNG shall be retained by the research programme for the purchase of equipment or covering material costs and shall be used within a maximum of two financial years.

## **Article 17**

### **Resolving disagreements**

Any disagreements related to the young researcher training shall be resolved at the University with the assistance of the committee.

## **Article 18**

### **Early completion of studies**

If a young researcher successfully completes the training (successfully defends their doctoral thesis) before the end of the approved funding period, a reward of 30% of the young researcher's gross salary shall be granted for each month of training completed early, up to a maximum of six months, for the time remaining until the end of the approved funding period, which should not be less than one month. The reward may be covered from the remaining funds for young researchers.

## **Article 19**

### **Reporting**

In cooperation with the head of the organisational unit mentors shall draw up a report each year on the implementation of the programme referred to in Article 8 of the Rules. In the event of underperformance, they shall provide an explanation and any suggestions for improvement. Mentors shall complement the programme, if necessary. The report shall also include a summary of the funding of the young researcher's activities. The report and the updated programme, signed by the mentor and the head of the organisational unit, shall be submitted by the end of January (except in the first year of the young researcher's training) to the vice-rector in charge of research activity.

The vice-rector in charge of research activity shall examine the report and, taking into account any amendments to the programme, assess it as “not implemented”, “partially implemented”, “implemented” or “provisionally implemented”, and shall forward the report and the assessment to the Rector. In the case of the “not implemented” score, the vice-rector shall provide an opinion on the reasons for the insufficient implementation and propose appropriate measures.

## **Transitional and final provisions**

### **Article 20**

#### **Identification of mentor positions for 2022**

As the UNG-YR Methodology has not yet been adopted by the Senate, the committee shall determine the number of mentor positions per research programme for 2022, using the methodology applied by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) so far and taking into account the legislation in force in the field of research activity.

### **Article 21**

#### **Conditions necessary to become a mentor of a young researcher**

Notwithstanding Article 4 of the Rules, the conditions necessary to become a mentor of a young researcher shall also apply to newly appointed mentors in the event of a change of the mentors of any young researchers already employed.

### **Article 22**

#### **Call to tender for young researcher candidates in 2022**

Notwithstanding Article 5 of the Rules, UNG shall publish in 2022 a call to tender for young researcher candidates on 30 June 2022.

### **Article 23**

#### **Direct application of ARRS regulations**

In the event that the ARRS, after the adoption and the entry into force of these Rules, issues a regulation governing differently the funding and procedures relating to the training of young researchers or the determination of the number and procedure for the appointment of mentors



and young researchers, the training programme, the criteria, the method of evaluation and the selection of candidates for young researchers, the act of the ARRS shall be directly applicable until such time as these Rules are harmonised.

## **Article 24**

### **Entry into force**

These Rules shall enter into force on the day following their adoption by the UNG Governing Board and the publication on the UNG website.