**Criteria for Evaluation of Project Applications**

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| Title of the operational programme | Growth and Employment |
| Title and number of the priority axis  | 8. Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning |
| Title and number of the specific objective (SO)  | 8.2.2. To strengthen academic staff of higher education institutions in strategic specialisation areas |
| Selection type of project applications | Open selection of project applications |
| Responsible institution | Ministry of Education and Science |
| Selection round of project applications | Round 1 of selection of project applications |
| **1. COMMON CRITERIA** | **Evaluation system** | **Impact of the criterion on decision-making****(R[[1]](#footnote-1); A[[2]](#footnote-2))** |
| **Yes or No** |
| 1.1. | The project applicant meets the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers regulations set for project applicants for the implementation of the specific objective (SO).[[3]](#footnote-3) |  | R |
| 1.2. | The project application form completed using a computer. |  | R |
| 1.3. | The project applicant has sufficient administrative, implementation and financial capacities to implement the project.  |  | A |
| 1.4. | On the date of project application, the project applicant for each separately has no tax debts in the Republic of Latvia, including mandatory social security contribution debts exceeding a total of EUR 150. |  | A |
| 1.5. | The project application has been submitted to the Cohesion Policy funds management information system for 2014–2020 |  | A |
| 1.6. | The project application form has been completed in Latvian in compliance with the requirements of Regulations No. 784 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 16 December 2014 “Procedures by which the institutions involved in the management of European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund shall ensure preparation of programming documents and implementation of such funds in the 2014–2020 programming period”, the project application contains all the documents required by the project selection regulations, they have been prepared in Latvian or accompanied by a certified translation into Latvian. |  | A |
| 1.7. | The financial data in the project application are indicated in EUR. |  | A |
| 1.8. | Financial calculations in the project application are arithmetically correct and comply with the requirements of the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO and with the project application form in Annex 1 to Regulations No. 784 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 16 December 2014 “Procedures by which the institutions involved in the management of European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund shall ensure preparation of programming documents and implementation of such funds in the 2014–2020 programming period”. |  | A |
| 1.9. | The amount of funding in the project application to be provided by the European Social Fund (ESF) corresponds to the allowable project funding set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.10. | The ESF aid intensity indicated in the project application does not exceed the maximum ESF aid intensity set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.11. | The total planned costs included in the project application (total eligible costs of the project and total costs of the project), planned eligible activities and cost items correspond to those set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO, incl. do not exceed the set cost item amounts, and: | - | - |
| 1.11.1. are related to project implementation;  |  | A |
| 1.11.2. are necessary for the implementation of the project (implementation of the project activities, meeting the needs of the target group, addressing the problem defined);  |  | A |
| 1.11.3. ensure the achievement of the project objective and indicators. |  | A |
| 1.12. | The project implementation deadlines correspond to the project implementation period set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.13. | The project objective corresponds to the objective stated in the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.14. | The planned expected results and monitoring indicators are precisely defined in the project application, they are justified, measurable and foster the achievement of indicators set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.15. | Project activities planned in the application:  | - | - |
| 1.15.1. correspond to the eligible activities set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO; |  | A |
| 1.15.2. are precisely defined and justified, and address the problems defined by the project. |  | A |
| 1.15.3. are clear and realistic, with precisely defined deadlines and results. |  | A |
| 1.16. | The publicity and information measures planned in the project application comply with the conditions of the General Regulation[[4]](#footnote-4) and Regulations No. 87 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 17 February 2015 “Procedures by which the compliance with communication and visual identity requirements shall be ensured in the implementation of the European Union structural funds and the Cohesion Fund in the 2014–2020 programming period”. |  | A |
| 1.17. | The project application identifies, describes and assesses project risks, evaluates their impact and likelihood, and defines mitigation measures.  |  | A |
| **2. SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA** | **Evaluation system** | **Impact of the criterion on decision-making****(R[[5]](#footnote-5); A[[6]](#footnote-6))** |
| **Yes or No** |
| 2.1. | The project application shows that the planned academic staff development activities: |  | A |
| 2.1.1. strengthen the strategic specialization of the project applicant’s institution; |
| 2.1.2. correspond to the research directions defined in the development strategy and the human resources development plan of the project applicant’s institution. |
| 2.2. | The plan of academic staff development activities includes: |  | A |
| 2.2.1. Characteristics of the target group, including at the level of study programmes; |
| 2.2.2. Intended staff development and attraction activities, including:* A general description of activities, goals and results to be achieved, the indicative volume of the target group to be involved in the activities;
* The structure of competencies, renewal directions of academic staff and principles of selection of doctoral students;
* Directions of placement activities of the existing academic staff with merchants in Latvia and characteristics and principles of selection of the potential merchants, who could provide placement activities;
* Areas of work, competencies of foreign staff to be attracted, and study programmes, for the implementation of which there are plans to attract them, as well as conditions of attraction and long-term cooperation.
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| 2.2.3. Application and selection procedure and criteria for participation in development activities; |
| 2.2.4. Result achievement quality management and monitoring activities. |
| 2.3. | The project application characterises the contribution of the activities planned within the project to the staff development and attraction activities envisaged in the plan of academic staff development activities during the implementation of the project and in the long term. |  | A |
| 2.4. | An evaluation of English language skill level of the academic staff of the project applicant’s institution (*according to the internationally recognised six-level system – A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2*), which properly justifies the compliance and justification of staff competencies improvement activities planned within the project, is appended to the project application. |  | A |
| 2.5. | The project application shows that an organisational structure is operating in the higher education institution which fulfils the tasks of attracting and supporting foreign academic staff in a transparent and efficient manner, and is capable of operating in a strategic and coordinated way. |  | A |
| 2.6. | The project application envisages that an open competition will be organised for the activities planned within the scope of the project for the selection of doctoral students and foreign academic staff, which will also be published on the Euraxess portal. |  | A |
| 2.7. | The project application includes information about complementarity and non-overlapping of the activities planned within the project with the activities implemented from the State budget and other public funding. |  | A |
| **3. QUALITY CRITERIA[[7]](#footnote-7)[[8]](#footnote-8)** | **Evaluation system[[9]](#footnote-9) — score** | **Notes** |
| **Minimum – 15.5 points, maximum – 22 points** |
| 3.1. | **Relevance of the project:** | **0 – 5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | At least **4** points must be scored |
| 3.1.1. The project corresponds to the objectives of Latvian Higher Education Policy and Smart Specialisation Strategy; |
| 3.1.2. The project corresponds to the research directions defined in the development strategy of the higher education institution (hereinafter – HEI), the study programmes development plan and the human resources development plan, and strengthens internationalization of the HEI and the quality of implementation and international competitiveness of study programmes, including aimed at maximum realisation of abilities of the existing academic staff. |
| 3.1.3. Academic staff development activities intended within the scope of the project correspond to the specialisation of the HEI and development needs of the economy; |
| 3.1.4. The project complements other initiatives and projects implemented or ongoing at the higher education institution. |
| 3.2. | **Quality of project design and implementation:** | **0 – 5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | At least **4** points must be scored |
| 3.2.1. The activities planned within the project are sound and developed in a quality that enables achievement of the expected results.A structure of competencies of staff has been developed.A clear and understandable procedure of selection of doctoral students, foreign academic staff and academic staff for the involvement into each of the aided activities has been developed.The content, organisational and calendar plan of placement activities, as well as criteria for the selection of merchants for placement and the procedure of cooperation with the merchants is clear, justified, qualitative and ensures the achievement of the planned goals and results, it is justified by the feasibility study carried out by the HEI or the analysis of the previous cooperation experience; phases of implementation of placement activities (preparations, implementation of placement and evaluation of the work performed) have been developed in a qualitative way.Foreign staff information and support activities have been developed in a qualitative way, for example, envisaging support for accommodation, learning of language, administrative support (insurance, visa, etc.).  |
| 3.2.2. The activities planned within the project and the target group selection principles are contextually appropriate for the achievement of the objective, their reciprocal logic is justified and appropriate for the effective achievement of the planned results;  |
| 3.2.3. The project is economically feasible, with adequate resources envisaged for each project activity;  |
| 3.2.4. The overall project design ensures consistency between its objectives, substantive solutions, activities and planned budget. |
| 3.3. | **Quality of the project implementation team:** | **0 – 5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | At least **3.5** points must be scored |
| 3.3.1. The project implementation staff have appropriate competencies, skills, experience and management support to successfully implement all the activities planned within the project and achieve the set objective; |
| 3.3.2. The distribution of the duties and tasks of staff involved in the project implementation is clear and appropriate for the fulfilment of the tasks envisaged in the project, including envisage proper resources for support and integration of foreign academic staff, effectively uses internal language learning services (if any); |
| 3.3.3. The control measures envisaged by the HEI in the project application ensure that the project will be implemented in high quality, completed in a timely manner and will fit within the volume of funding envisaged for the project; |
| 3.3.4. The project envisages an efficient cooperation mechanism between all actors involved to ensure effective (qualitative, operative) coordination, decision-making and communication, including the procedure of cooperation with merchants, who will ensure placement opportunities. |
| 3.4. | **Impact and dissemination:** | **0 – 5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | At least **3.5** points must be scored |
| 3.4.1. The results planned in the project application, their indicators and the impact of their results are accurately defined, measurable and ensure satisfaction of the needs of target audiences (incl. the results have a multiplier effect and their sustainability is shown); |
| 3.4.2. The project will have a significant impact on academic staff as individuals and capacities of the project applicant’s institution and development and modernisation of higher education in order to make them available to society as a whole and to the labour market, and to support their international cooperation capacities; |
| 3.4.3. The project will have an impact outside the participating organisations at a local/regional/national or international level. It envisages appropriate measures to monitor progress and evaluate the expected (short- and long-term) impact; |
| 3.4.4. The project envisages a clear and efficient plan for dissemination of results and includes appropriate measures, tools and channels to ensure efficient dissemination of results and outputs among stakeholders, both during and after project implementation. |
| 3.4.5. The project includes appropriate measures and resources to ensure sustainability of its results and outputs after the completion. |
| 3.5. | **Maturity of the project:** | **0 – 1.5**  | At least **0.5** points must be scored |
| 3.5.1. Selection of foreign academic staff has been carried out and in the first academic year (ac.y. 2018/2019) within the scope of the project there are intentions to involve: 3.5.1.1. at least one foreign academic staff representative in each of the study directions planned within the project (if several study directions are envisaged within the scope of the project); | **0.5** |
| 3.5.1.2. two or more foreign academic staff representatives in each of the study directions planned within the project (if several study directions are envisaged within the scope of the project); | **1** |
| 3.5.2. Merchants have been selected for the implementation of HEI’s academic staff placement activities for the first academic year and the implementation of the HEI’s academic staff placement activities is intended in at least 5 enterprises in the first academic year (ac.y. 2018/2019) in each of the study directions planned within the project (if several study directions are envisaged within the scope of the project); | **0.5** |
| 3.5.3. foreign academic staff or merchants have not been selected and the commencement of activities is not planned in the first academic year (ac.y. 2018/2019) according to the provisions of criteria 3.5.1 or 3.5.2. | **0** |
| 3.6. | **Previous experience:** | **0.5** | The criterion gives an additional point |
| The HEI has a previous experience in the implementation of academic staff mobility activities within the scope of international programmes (ERASMUS, ERASMUS+, financial instrument of the European Economic Area and Norway, the Latvian-Swiss cooperation programme). |
| **4. QUALITY CRITERIA FOR HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES** | **Evaluation system — score** | **The criterion gives an additional half point** |
| 4.1. | Horizontal priority “Equal opportunities” | **0 – 0.5** | The criterion gives an additional point |
| 4.1.1. The specific activities planned within the project promote compliance with the horizontal principle of “Equal opportunities” (gender equality, disability, age and ethnicity). | 0.5 |
| 4.1.2. No specific activities are planned within the project to promote compliance with the horizontal principle of “Equal opportunities” (gender equality, disability, age and ethnicity). | 0 |
| 4.2. | Horizontal priority “Sustainable development”. | **0 – 0.5** | The criterion gives an additional point |
| 4.2.1 There are intentions to use green procurement in the implementation of the project. | 0.5 |
| 4.2.2. There are no intentions to use green procurement in the implementation of the project. | 0 |

1. In case of discrepancy of the criterion, the cooperation authority shall decide on rejection of the project application. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In case of a discrepancy of the criterion, the cooperation authority shall decide on conditional approval of the project application, with consideration of the project selection regulations for the Specific Objective. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Compliance of the project applicant’s legal status is assessed under the criterion. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In case of discrepancy of the criterion, the cooperation authority shall decide on rejection of the project application [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In case of a discrepancy of the criterion, the cooperation authority shall decide on conditional approval of the project application, with consideration of the project selection regulations for the Specific Objective [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Experts from the database of experts of the European Commission carry out the evaluation of project applications based on the quality criteria. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Weight of the criteria is as follows:

3.1. Relevance of the project — **30%**;

3.2. Quality of project design and implementation — **30%**;

3.3. Quality of the project implementation team — **15%**;

3.4. Impact and dissemination — **15%**;

3.5. Maturity of the project — **4%**;

3.6. Previous experience — **2%;**

4.1. Horizontal priority “Equal opportunities” — **2%**;

4.2. Horizontal priority “Sustainable development” — **2%.** [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For the assessment of quality criteria 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, the expert applies the following approach:

0 points — The application fails to address the respective criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information (unless a “manifest clerical error has occurred”);

1 point — Weak: the criterion is not sufficiently addressed, or there are serious deficiencies in the application;

2 points — Fair: the application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are some significant shortcomings;

3 points — Good: the application addresses the criterion well, but there is still a number of shortcomings;

4 points — Very good: the application addresses the criterion very well, but there is still a small number of shortcomings;

5 points — Excellent: the application successfully meets all the relevant aspects of the criterion; if there are shortcomings, they are minor.

Based on the expert evaluation form, the expert justifies the number of points awarded

The compliance of the project application with quality criteria 3.5 and 3.6, including criteria about horizontal priorities 4.1 and 4.2 is assessed against scores defined. Where necessary, the criteria indicate the minimum score for the project application not to be rejected. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)