

SAS Scholarship Program
("Program")
Guide for Evaluators

January 2013

SAS Scholarship Program aims to attract talented researchers working abroad to Slovakia joining the SAS institutes. The program focuses primarily on researchers who have completed post-doctoral positions at leading institutions abroad, respectively on outstanding scientific personalities working abroad. Evaluation criteria, enabling to finance work stay of the best quality researchers at SAS institutes with consideration of work program and host institution quality, correspond with the main objective of the Program.

Scholarship provides salary with statutory deductions to the applicant. The applicant must demonstrate that she/he is the principal investigator of national or foreign grant, enabling her/him to carry out the research objectives stated in the application.

The evaluation process is based on a peer review system that ensures unbiased, professional and quality assessment of applications. Evaluation is realized by independent evaluators, who are chosen from experts in the relevant scientific area and by the committees, whose members are experts in the concerned scientific division.

Program Committees

There are three Program committees and they correspond with the dividing of SAS institutes to the scientific divisions based on their research focus:

Committee for Physical, Space, Earth and Engineering Sciences
Committee for Chemical, Medical and Environmental Sciences
Committee for Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts and Culture

Vice-president of the relevant SAS scientific division is the chairman of the committee. Committee's members are appointed by the SAS President, on a proposal of the SAS Scientific Council. Each committee is composed by at least 7 members who are outside of SAS with exception of relevant SAS vice-president. List of the members of individual committees is published on the website of SAS. Functional term of the committees is 4 years.

Members of the individual committees are specialists for the relevant scientific division. In case of applications with the work program of frontier or interdisciplinary character or for another reasonable need, the President of SAS, on the request of relevant committee and with the SAS Scientific Council approval, may appoint *ad hoc* member/members whose scientific focus corresponds closest to the concerned work program. The maximum two *ad hoc* members can be appointed for one application.

President of the SAS is entitled to participate in any meeting of the committees.

At the end of the calendar year, Presidium of the SAS sets the amount of financial resources which can be allocated to the committees for Program support. Based on this decision,

at the beginning of the next calendar year, committees determine and publish number of applicants who can be supported in the given calendar year. Therefore, this number is dependent on financial resources allocable to the Program.

Committee shall act by majority vote, only members of the committee can vote. Committee has quorum in presence of absolute majority of all its members.

Minutes shall is drawn up about meeting of committees and it contains main points of meeting, resolutions to individual points, deadlines and responsible persons for their execution. Chairman of the committee is responsible for the accuracy of the minutes shall.

Evaluators

Evaluators are independent experts from the relevant scientific fields, who are capable to make an adequate and objective assessment of the proposed researcher quality, as well as the planned work program. Three reviewers are assigned for evaluation of each application; at least one of them is from abroad.

Potential bias and conflict of interest must be taken into account when the evaluators are assigned. In case of reasonable suspicion of bias or conflict of interest of any evaluator or committee member, she/he is excluded from the application assessment or from voting of committee about the application. Chairman of concerned committee takes a decision about the potential bias or conflict of decision.

Data provided to the evaluators via application are considered confidential and evaluators are obliged to deal with them in this way.

Evaluators assess the application anonymously and they take into account the evaluation criteria given and specified in Annex 1 of this Guide. Each criterion is scored from 0-100 and the score is assessed based on the percentage weighting of individual criterion. Written comment to each criterion and reasoning of score is a part of Evaluation Protocol.

The evaluation procedure

1. After obtaining the application, Department of the Research and Development of the SAS Office (R&DD) checks the application formalities. In case of missing data or other formal deficiencies director of the institute is called to their completion or removal within 2 weeks of receiving the call.
2. R&DD informs the institute director about receiving the complete and correctly filled application.
3. Subsequently, R&DD sends the application to the committee determined by the applicant.

4. After receiving, committee assesses whether the application is in its competence. If the committee concludes that the application is in competence of another committee, it is referred to this committee.
5. A rapporteur is assigned to each application and she/he briefly informs other members of committee about the application. Rapporteur also informs about compliance/non-compliance with criteria for eligible applicant. Eligibility criteria for applicant are as follows:
 - a) Age of researcher under 40 years at the time of application submission;
 - b) Completed doctoral studies and possessing PhD;
 - c) PhD obtained at least 3 years before application submission;
 - d) Minimum 2 years long continuous study or research stay in abroad which has been finished maximum 6 months before the time of application submission or it still lasts.

Based on this information, the application is either rejected in this stage of evaluation (in case of non-compliance with the criteria for eligible applicants) or the adequate evaluators are assigned to the (in case of compliance with the eligibility criteria).

7. The committee sends an application to three evaluators for assessment, of whom at least one is from abroad. Evaluators assess the project according to the principles and evaluation criteria set out in the Statute and in the Annex 1 of this Guide.
8. Subsequently, the committee discusses all applications with their assessments and based on them as well as on score from committee members, makes ratings of the applications. Based on the ratings, it determines which applicants will be funded from the Program. Presidium of the SAS decides about projects financing based on the individual committees proposals.
9. R&DD inform the applicant about the results of evaluation and about the financing/non-financing of her/his project.

Interim and final evaluation

1. Institute director sends annually interim report on implementation of the work program of the applicant together with the work program and timetable for the next calendar year to the chairman of the committee to 15th December.
2. In case that researcher or host institution don't comply with the agreed conditions and/or work program, chairman of the committee refers this interim report to the SAS Scientific Council with recommendation to finish the program.

3. Director of the institute sends a final report about completion of the work program, tasks and achieved results to the SAS Scientific Council.
4. Based on the voting of members, SAS Scientific Council issues a certificate of accomplishment/non-accomplishment of program objectives and tasks.

Annex 1: Evaluation criteria and their weighting

Researcher (30%)	Project (25%)	Host institution (25%)	Transfer of knowledge and impact (20%)
Research experiences	Scientific quality and originality	Scientific quality of host institution (achieved results and outputs; publications, citations, patents, etc.)	Predicted impact of training on future scientific career of researcher
Scientific outputs – publication, patents, citations, etc.	Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary aspects	International scientific collaboration	Predicted impact of training on host institution (new methods, improvement of scientific work, new research fields, etc.)
Pedagogical and other skills and experiences	Appropriateness and adequacy of methodology	Projects implemented in the host institution (number, funding resources, duration)	Possible transfer of achieved results into the practice (cooperation with industry, business sector, etc.)
Skills and abilities to lead a scientific work group	Timeliness of project	Quality of infrastructure	
	Expected outputs (publications, products, patents, etc.)	Personal resources	