

Approved by Senate of Ventspils University College

2015 " ". \_\_\_\_\_ Decision No. 15-

**Regulations "Support for doctoral candidates, obtained in an international competition for Ventspils University College"**

1. These regulations (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) establish the procedure of allocating a grant (scholarship) from Ventspils University College (hereinafter - VUC) Engineering Institute "Ventspils International Radio Astronomy Centre" (hereinafter - VIRAC) based on the Ventspils City Council (hereinafter - local government) funding. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of an international competition for developing doctoral thesis on radio astronomy or astrophysics in doctoral studies for a period of up to four calendar years.
2. The aim of awarding the grant is to achieve and retain the quantitative indicators regarding staff members with a doctoral degree set by the Latvian Law on Higher Education by promoting the development of PhD (doctoral) theses and their subsequent defense on topics essential for the development of VUC VIRAC.
3. During the year 2015, starting from September, the scholarship is € 1,422.87 per month, in the successive years – € 1420. Scholarship will be paid starting with the month in which the applicant starts doctoral studies. The necessary condition for its allocation is developing the PhD thesis complying with any one of VUC VIRAC strategic research directions.
4. The competition for grants within the available financial capacity shall be announced to applicants no later than July 1 each year at the VUC website in Latvian and English, and at least in one of astronomy-related personnel recruitment database. The deadline for submitting documents is set not later than July 30th each year. The results shall be announced via the applicant's e-mail on August 15th. In the announcement of the competition, the possible topics of PhD theses shall be defined.
5. Grants are awarded on the basis of competition results. If the grant is awarded, a corresponding contract is to be signed with applicant.
6. If a scholarship recipient suspends doctoral studies, scholarships shall be suspended and renewed only when the studies are resumed.
7. The contest for the grants shall be organized by the Competition Commission, appointed by the VUC VIRAC Scientific Council (hereinafter – SC) and approved by the VUC Rector.
8. The competition is open to any physical person who fulfils the following requirements:
  - a. The physical person's qualifications comply with the requirements of the doctoral studies;
  - b. A planned or approved PhD thesis topic corresponds to a research area of radio astronomy or astrophysics;
  - c. The person conforms with at least one of the following criteria:
    - i. The master's degree is obtained in a university which, according the latest international Thomson Reuters rank of universities, is among the world's top 400 universities (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2013-14/world-ranking/range/351-400>) or between the world's top 200 universities in the field of physics and astronomy education (<http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2014/physics#sorting=rank+region=+country=+faculty=+stars=false+search>);
    - ii. presents a letter of recommendation from an internationally recognized astrophysics or astronomy scientist holding a position of Professor or equivalent of Latvian

- position of Leading Researcher in one of the 400 best universities represented by the Thomson Reuters with an astronomy related direction;
- iii. over the last five years, has at least 3 astrophysics-related scientific publications in the Thomson Reuters database in journals with Impact Factor more than 1.
9. The Commission announces the competition in accordance with the Regulations. In order to apply, the applicant shall submit the following documents or their notarized translations into Latvian or English, or their copies (in the latter case, the Applicant shall submit or send the originals or notarized copies if he/she wins the contest):
- a valid passport or ID;
  - a qualification document which, in accordance with the Regulations, allows access to doctoral studies;
  - Europass CV;
  - a letter of motivation;
  - an annotation of the planned PhD thesis, approved by the potential supervisor;
  - a list of publications (if any);
  - letters of recommendation (if any).
10. In order to evaluate the results of the competition, the Commission appoints 3 experts with a doctoral degree and expertise in radio astronomy and astrophysics and, on the basis of opinion of the experts, decides on grant allocation. Competition and expert commissions decide by open ballot, if in favor of the decision votes the majority of the members. If the decision cannot be adopted (for example, votes for each of the applicants are tied), then the issue is resolved by VIRAC SC.
11. In the process of decision taking, the Competition and expert commissions consider the following criteria, which must meet the minimum requirements:
- documents submitted according to the Regulations (mandatory);
  - the scientific quality of the submitted application (hereinafter – Application);
  - conformity of the Application with VIRAC radio astronomy or astrophysics research priorities;
  - the scientific quality of negotiations (teleconferencing mode is acceptable);
  - the applicant's ability to develop the thesis and then continue scientific activities in the VUC in not less than 0.75 workload for at least 3 years.
12. If necessary, the competition and expert commissions may request additional information from applicants or negotiate with them before making their decision (teleconferencing mode is acceptable).
13. If the grant is awarded, a corresponding contract is to be signed with applicant. If the Grant is awarded and the beneficiary fails to fulfil one or more of the clauses of this Regulation or the Contract, VUC has the right to demand the reimbursement of the awarded money. If the Grant is awarded, an employment contract with the VUC shall also be signed, and the scientific activity of the student shall be carried out also on behalf of the VUC.
14. In case the terms of the contract have not been followed, the grant shall be repaid in the VUC bank account.
15. The doctoral student submits a progress report approved by the supervisor in Latvian or English at least every 6 months describing the accomplishments in the respective period. The report must be submitted within 2 weeks after the end of the current reporting period. The decision on the work quality and relevance of the student's work plan shall be made by SC.
16. The doctoral student is obliged to submit the PhD thesis to the respective Promotion Council before the deadline for thesis development defined in the contract. After the submission of thesis, the grant shall be discontinued, but the student, in accordance with the relevant regulations, may apply for the scholarship supporting the defense of the PhD thesis.

17. The PhD student shall spend in VIRAC at least half of the working time in each calendar year and shall indicate the affiliation with the VUC VIRAC in his/her publications.
18. Questions concerning this scholarship, not dealt within these Regulations, if any, shall be decided by the VUC Rector on the basis of the recommendations by the VIRAC Director or SC.