**NERD Programme**

NERD (**N**etwork of **E**xcellence in **R**esearch for **D**octoral Degree Students) is a new grant programme aimed at supporting exceptional research projects of **doctoral degree students at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (UMPRUM). The programme is funded within the OP RDE** *"Improvement of internal grant projects at UMPRUM" project* (CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/19\_073/0016946).

The goal of NERD is to increase the skill level of Ph.D. students necessary for their future professional success in the field of research and development. Through student grants within this competition, Ph.D. students will gain the opportunity to conduct their own research activities and develop other cross-sectional skills associated with the implementation of the project (communication, problem solving, organization, project management, time management, etc.). Carrying out educational/research activity abroad is part of the project, as well.

NERD does not replace the existing Student Grant Competition. It is a completely new selection competition, the aim of which is to support the best doctoral degree students who present exceptional and unique projects. The NERD competition and the Student Grant Competition will take place separately and simultaneously.

**Basic information**

**FOR WHOM:**

The project proposal can be submitted by a doctoral degree student at UMPRUM during a standard study period. The researcher must be a student throughout the project.

Student grant researchers have the support of a mentor, i.e. a member of the research or academic staff of UMPRUM, who provides the grant researcher with professional and methodological support for the entire duration of the project.

**WHAT:**

Within the framework of announced calls, the NERD programme will support a very limited number of doctoral degree students who present high-quality, exceptional projects.

The length of the student grant can be 3 to 10 months (depending on the difficulty of the topic dealt with).

The topic of the student grant shall not be identical with the topic of the project researcher’s dissertation, but research activities within the project may be part of the researched topic within the framework of the doctoral study and the project outputs can be used for the dissertation. The supervisor comments on this fact in one of the annexes.

The student can be the researcher of only one project within the framework of the currently announced call of the NERD programme at a time and, at the same time, the student may not participate with the same project in the ongoing year of the Student Grant Competition.

During the implementation of the student grant, researchers must carry out at least one educational/research activity abroad (e.g. internship, summer school, research stay, active participation in a conference), which is not limited in time and must be directly related to the project. The researcher must be an active participant in the activity, not just an attendant (e.g. speaking at a conference vs. attending a conference as a listener). If the activity is carried out in a country where the student’s mother language is understood (e.g. Slovakia), at least part of the activity must be carried out in a foreign language (e.g. presentation of a paper, a study text).

Activities within the project should lead to the achievement of results applicable within the RIV (Register of Information on Results) / RUV (Register of Artistic Outputs). This condition will be assessed as part of the evaluation of the student project and the supervisor of the dissertation will comment on it. The degree of fulfilment will be described by the student in the Final Activity Report and supported by other annexes (e.g. manuscript of an article, prepared materials for an exhibition, workshop programme, etc.). Applicable outputs in the RIV/RUV will be an important factor in the Grant Commission’s decision to award the grant.

**HOW:**

The student submits the project proposal in paper form and electronically by email to the competition administrator within the competition period.

Each doctoral degree student can submit one project within the announced call.

The student grant application, including all annexes, must be prepared and submitted in English language.

The amount of the researcher’s workload for the duration of the project implementation is remunerated through a scholarship and corresponds to 0.5 FTE.

The project proposal shall contain in particular the characteristics of the project, the current state of research in the issue area being researched, expected outputs, educational objectives, project budget, the student’s CV, the mentor’s CV, statement of the supervisor of the dissertation, consent of the mentor and other requirements specified in the application.

The student grant application must include a summary of the educational objectives of the researcher, which he/she sets when submitting the project. These are the activities and abilities that the student has acquired through the participation in the NERD programme, from the submission of the application, through the management and solving of the project, the preparation of regular Activity Reports to the proper completion and conclusion of the project. These are, for example, communication, problem solving, organization, project management, time management, improvement in a foreign language, internationalization, etc. In the Final Activity Report, the researcher will assess the achievement of these objectives, e.g. in the form of self-assessment.

**EVALUATION:**

Each project will be evaluated by two external evaluators in the following categories: a) overall quality of the project – professional standard, quality of elaboration (0 to 40 points), b) clearly defined and achievable research goal, achievability of expected outputs (0 to 40 points), c) contribution of foreign activity in the project (0 to 10 points), d) adequacy of the budget and the length of the project (0 to 10 points); and by the NERD Programme Evaluation Commission which will assess the feasibility of the projects and their benefits for UMPRUM (0 to 40 points).

**FUNDING:**

Student grants are funded through unit costs (see below). The project will cover personal costs of the researcher, other costs associated with the implementation of the project, costs associated with the organization and administration of student grants and the remuneration for the mentor.

With the workload of 0.5 FTE, which was set by the Rector’s Order, the total grant will amount to CZK 39,930 per month. Of this, CZK 23,335 will be for the student’s personal costs and the remaining amount of CZK 16,595 will be divided to cover other costs, the mentor’s remuneration and costs associated with the organization of the competition.

The basic structure of the budget consists of:

a) personal costs of the researcher – CZK 23,335 per month,

b) remuneration for the mentor (altogether CZK 20,000 for the period of the project implementation + employer’s transfer payments),

c) other costs (covering the researcher’s travel expenses, costs of professional literature, small equipment, material, software, external training, etc. – they will be also paid in the form of scholarship),

d) school’s overhead costs in the amount of 10% of the total project budget, covering costs associated with the administration and organization of student grants.

The annex "Budget Calculator" is used to calculate the amount of the grant and its distribution.

The amount of the grant corresponding to personal costs (letter (a)) and other costs (letter (c)) will be paid to the researcher in the form of scholarship. The use of the other parts of the grant budget (mentor’s remuneration according to letter (b) and overhead costs according to letter (d) will be arranged by the NERD programme administrator.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

The project always starts on the first day of the calendar month and ends on the last day of the calendar month. The project can be interrupted, if the researcher is not able to carry on the project for a given period of time. The interruption may occur repeatedly, but always on the basis of a reasonable justification.

For each month of the grant implementation, the student grant researcher prepares the Activity Report (containing the activities carried out in the given month, evaluation of the progress of work on outputs, plan of activities for the following period, request for non-substantial or substantial changes, etc.) and submits it both electronically by email and in paper form. Each Activity Report must be signed by both the researcher and mentor and subsequently approved by the competition administrator.

At the end of the grant implementation, each researcher will submit the Final Activity Report (containing a summary of the grant implementation, achieved outputs and fulfilment of educational objectives stated in the student grant application, e.g. in the form of reflection). From the position of the mentor(s) the Final Activity Report will also include: a summary of mentored activities, including the assessment of the grant implementation, acquired knowledge and outputs, recommendations for further/future research activities of the student. The Final Activity Report must be submitted both in paper form and electronically by email to the competition administrator. Each Final Activity Report must be signed by both the researcher and mentor and subsequently approved by the competition administrator.