



‘Excellence Initiative – Research University’ programme

Information for potential candidates for members of an international team of experts

The Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education launches **the first edition of the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” programme**. This is one of the most important aspects of the reform of the Polish higher education and science system which has been implemented since October 2018. The programme aims at selecting a group of leading Polish Higher Education Institutions with the potential to become research-intensive universities performing world-class research and top-level, research-based education.

The programme allows for selecting up to 10 universities which would receive additional funding for a period of 7 years (6 years in future rounds of the programme), equal to 10% of a regular subvention from the public budget. The funding will be granted based on a performance agreement.

A university applying for additional funding should present a **6-year development plan** in which it would declare objectives and related activities resulting in significant enhancement of: research impact on world science, international collaboration with world-class research centres, quality of higher education and doctoral training as well as quality of management. It should identify priority research fields that would be the target of intensified efforts as the plan is implemented.

Applications will be assessed against 4 criteria:

- overall quality of an application, i.a., its conciseness, quality of SWOT analysis;
- relevance and sustainability of the objectives defined in the development plan, including the degree to which they allow for meeting the programme’s expected outcomes;
- adequacy and feasibility of planned actions, including their relevance in the context of the objectives;
- potential of the applying university in terms of research, international collaboration, educational provision and doctoral training, as well as management and HR policy.

While assessing an application against the criteria concerning the relevance of the objectives and the potential of the university, the value of selected indicators will also be taken into account.

The implementation of the plan will be subject to mid-term and final evaluation. A positive outcome of the final evaluation will be a prerequisite for an extension of the funding for the next period. Apart from that, there is a rule forcing at least two universities to drop out from the programme based on the evaluation outcome and the assessment of the development plan for the next period. The resultant “vacancies” will be filled with HEIs selected in the next competition.

Currently, 20 Polish universities are entitled to apply in the first competition.





International team of experts

Applications will be evaluated by an **international team of experts**. The Ministry is searching for **candidates** who:

- have strong expertise and outstanding achievements in policy development and implementation in the field of higher education and science at university or national levels, or
- are research leaders with a recognised track record of outstanding research achievements in different fields of science (including research on higher education).

The Ministry is searching for candidates who are (or used to be) employed outside Poland at an internationally renowned university or research centre, or at an institution acting for the higher education and science system. Preference will be given to candidates with experience in evaluating higher education reforms or university strategies, or in assessing applications in programmes similar to the Excellence Initiative.

A candidate must not be employed at a university eligible for this competition.

Main tasks of the team members and working methods

The team will consist of 12-15 experts, including the Chair appointed by the Minister of Science and Higher Education. The team will be officially established by the end of May.

On **June 19**, the team members will take part in a half-day **kick-off webinar** devoted to the presentation of programme details, including technicalities. During the webinar, the experts are also expected to discuss working methods and criteria. Each application will be evaluated by 2 or 3 experts, including one rapporteur. Consequently, **each team member will evaluate 4 applications, including 1 or 2 as a rapporteur**. Approximately on **July 15**, a **second webinar** will be organized. It will be devoted to distribution of applications among the team members.

The assessment process includes **interviews with applicants**. Those will take place during **4-day meetings** scheduled for **the first half of September (approximately 3-6) in Warsaw**. Each team member will prepare initial reviews of the applications before the meetings. Based on the initial reviews, as well as on conclusions from the interviews, a rapporteur will prepare a draft report in collaboration with other team members reviewing a given application and the Chair. The deadline for submitting draft reports will be October 4. The evaluated universities will have the right to file justified reservations within 7 days.

The expert team will meet once again **at the end of October (approximately 29-30) in Warsaw** for a meeting devoted to considering any reservations, performing the final assessment of the applications and ranking those with positive grades.





Road map

- candidates for the expert team should declare their interest by the end of March;
- the application form for universities will be published by the end of March;
- the expert team will be established by the end of May;
- eligible universities may submit their application from May 15 to June 24;
- a kick-off webinar on June 19;
- the expert team will evaluate the applications from July to October. The assessment process will include, i.a., a webinar devoted to distribution of applications among the team members (July 15), interviews with representatives of universities (first half of September) and the final meeting of the team (last week of October).

Remuneration

Each expert will be paid an amount of 26,000-28,000 PLN (currently, 1 EUR = 4.32 PLN), depending on the number of applications he or she reviews as a rapporteur. The Chair will receive 34,000-36,000 PLN. The costs of transportation, accommodation and meals will be covered by the Ministry.

