



GRANTS  
The Finnish Medical Foundation

## Application process

### Applying for grants

Encouragement Grants from Finnish Medical Society Duodecim; Research, Encouragement and Eka Grants from The Finnish Medical Foundation; and Returning Researcher and Research Group Founder Grants **can be applied for annually between May 1 and May 31<sup>st</sup>.**

Applications are made via the Foundation's Grant Service at <https://laaketieteensaatio.rimbort.fi/>.

### Application review

Grants are awarded based on scientific review of the applications. The Foundation's Scholarship Committee reviews Eka, Encouragement, and Research Grant applications. The Foundation's Grant Committee reviews applications for Returning Researcher and Research Group Founder Grants.

## Eka Grants

Eka Grants are available to medical students and licentiates beginning their research careers. As Eka Grants are aimed at early career researchers, the review process focuses on research plan and environment rather than the applicant's earlier achievements. There is no requirement for earlier publications for applicants.

Grants are paid to applicants in the calendar year following the grant being awarded, either in January, March, or August. The grant may be used to advance the research in a way the applicant sees fit. The grant is only awarded once and is not awarded to anyone who has defended a doctoral thesis before the application period ends.

The grant amount is 2,500 euros per applicant.

## Encouragement Grants

Both the Finnish Medical Foundation and Duodecim award Encouragement Grants. Both are applied for using the same form and the applications are reviewed using the same process.

Encouragement Grants may be used to advance the research in a way the applicant sees fit. The Encouragement Grant is only awarded once and will not be awarded to anyone who has defended a doctoral thesis before the application period ends. Encouragement Grants are available to young people working on their doctoral thesis and applications are reviewed based on the research plan and earlier merits.

**Medical Foundation Encouragement Grants** are paid to applicants in the calendar year following the grant being awarded, either in January, March, or August. **Duodecim Encouragement Grants** are paid in November of the application year.

The grant amount is 5,000 euros per applicant.

## Research Grants

Research Grants are awarded to aid medical students, licentiates and doctors in research work. The grant is intended to fund full-time research work for a period of 4, 8 or 12 months. Professors and docents are considered senior researchers and are therefore not eligible to apply.

The grant awarded consists of a maximum of 9,000 EUR (four-month grant), 18,000 EUR (eight-month grant) or 27,000 EUR (twelve-month grant). Grants are primarily paid in the calendar year following the grant being awarded. Payments are made in January, March and August.



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By accepting the grant, applicants commit to full-time research work. The goal is a continuous research period. If the research is split into smaller instalments, each instalment must last at least one month. Any additional paid work must not exceed 25% of working hours during the research period. The goal is to complete the research in the year following the grant being awarded. Eight and twelve-month research periods can be extended until the end of the second calendar year following the grant being awarded. Part-time research work covering at least 50% of working hours is possible for eight and twelve-month Research Grants, and the minimum research period is extended accordingly. Research Grants may be awarded twice.

Research Grant recipients must write a report describing how the grant was used. This report must be completed by the end of the year following the grant being awarded. It can be completed after the research period has ended. The report will describe periods of time spent on full-time research, the research subject, the research's primary achievements and information about the research being published. Reporting forms can be found in our Grant Service.

## Returning Researcher Grant

The Finnish Medical Foundation's Returning Researcher Grants are available to researchers returning to Finland from abroad. Grant eligibility requires a doctorate in medicine and a successful period of postdoctoral work abroad. Normally the minimum requirement is 12 months spent abroad, and applicants must still be abroad when they apply. The maximum grant amount is 50,000 EUR, of which no more than 5,000 EUR may be spent on general costs.

For the grant to be awarded and paid out, a university or equivalent institution must consent and commit to managing the applicant's project, using the funds according to principles or economic guidelines approved by the research institution. Awarded grants are paid in full to an account approved by the research institution in question. The grant may be used to pay for wages and other project costs in accordance to the cost estimate presented in the research plan.

The Foundation pays the grant in one instalment and requires the grant recipient to provide a final report of research progress and how the funds were used. The grant must be used during the calendar year following the grant being awarded. The Foundation's Board may extend this period based on a separate application. Grants that have not been taken into use during the calendar year following the grant being awarded will be cancelled. There will be no separate notification of cancellations.

## Research Group Founder Grant

**For doctors starting their independent researcher careers.**

**Research Group Founder Grants** are available to early career researchers who have completed their doctorate. The grants are awarded for projects with particular significance in the field of medicine.

The grant may be awarded for a continuous period of three years, starting from the beginning of the year following the grant being awarded. In 2019 the grants were between 150,000 and 200,000 EUR. A maximum of 10% of the grant amount may be used on general costs.

Professors, docents and other senior researchers are not eligible for these grants.

### Purpose

The grant is intended to make up for earnings lost as a result of the research period and to cover research-related costs. By separate request, the grant may also be used to pay the wages of another researcher involved with the project.

The applicant must present a plan of how the grant will be used, including a breakdown of wage costs and other research costs as well as the total costs and overall funding of the project.



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If the grant recipient is on leave of absence during the research period, the grant may only be used to cover wages up to the amount the researcher would receive during their leave of absence. In other cases, Academy of Finland Academy Research Fellow wages may be used as a reference for calculating personal wages.

### Terms

The Research Group Founder Grant is intended to fund full-time research work. The grant and annual payments are subject to the applicant working full-time on research enabled by the Foundation's grant, in clearly defined periods normally covering six months a year and a total of 18 months over three years. Part-time research work covering at least 50% of working hours is also possible, in which case the minimum research period will be extended accordingly. The wages paid to the researcher from the grant may not exceed 5,000 EUR per month. Paid part-time work may not exceed 25% of working hours during the research period.

### Payment

Research Group Founder Grants are never paid directly to the grant recipient. For the grant to be awarded, a university or equivalent institution must manage the funds and the funds must be used according to principles or economic guidelines approved by the research institution. Grants are paid in full to the research institution's account.

The Foundation pays out Research Group Founder Grants annually and requires the grant recipient to provide **annual reports** of research progress, including details of how working hours and funds were used compared to the research plan and cost estimate presented in the application. Reporting forms can be found in our Grant Service.

The grant must be used within the three calendar years following the grant being awarded. The Foundation's Board may extend this period based on a separate application. Grants that have not been taken into use during the calendar year following the grant being awarded will be cancelled. Any instalments that have not been taken into use within four full calendar years of the grant being awarded will also be cancelled. There will be no separate notice of cancellations.

### Registration

Filling out the application starts with registering to the service. Anyone who registered for last year's application round can use the same login information again. The system will send a confirmation of registration to the applicant's email address. Registration is only done once.

## Guidelines for Eka, Encouragement, and Research Grant applicants

Three to five experts from the Scholarship Committee review each application. Experts score the applications based on their views, but due to the large volume of applications, they use jointly agreed assessment criteria. The goal is for each application, regardless of whether they are for Eka, Encouragement or Research Grants, to be reviewed as equally as possible. Applications receiving mixed reviews are reviewed in detail during scholarship committee meetings and via email where necessary.



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The following exclusion criteria apply:

- For non-Eka Grants the applicant must have at least one peer-reviewed, PubMed indexed piece of original research published or in press. Applications failing to meet this will not be processed. Abstracts should not be included in the list of publications. Unclear cases will be checked against databases.
- Incomplete application
- Applicant is not a doctor of medicine or medical student
- Application is for postdoctoral work abroad – these will be funded through the Postdoc Pool

### General assessment criteria

In general, the application receives an average grade when all formal criteria are met (every requested section has been filled out) and the applicant has at least one approved publication (does not apply to Eka Grant applications.) In recent years, reaching the average level has not been enough to receive funding.

#### + Additional points are awarded for:

- Innovative research, important research subject or a research field lacking in information
- Project is heading toward completion (thesis within 1 to 2 years is a realistic goal)
- Application that has been excellently completed content-wise (see end)
- Most important findings have been clearly presented and offer significant new information
- Research field or method is particularly challenging, but has still been completed as planned
- Research field has clinical importance

#### - Points are docked for:

- An incomplete application (some are excluded immediately)
- Incoherent application
- Summary does not provide a clear picture of research project
- Research does not produce notable new information

### Research plan

The research plan is critical for the review. A good research plan includes among other things the following:

- Summary
- Background
- Goals
- Research questions & setting
- Execution & methods
- Applicant's personal role in research (important!)
- Current stage of research
- Research schedule
- Cost estimate and plan



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- Ethical matters

Typos and careless mistakes and poor Finnish or English create an impression of a plan that's hastily written and not necessarily well thought out. Early career researchers are encouraged to have their supervisor inspect the research plan before submitting it.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHO CAN APPLY for grants? WHICH GRANT should I apply for?

**Question:** I am a Master of Health Sciences graduate. Can Encouragement Grants be awarded to people with other medicine-related degrees, not just medical doctors and students?

- Finnish Medical Society Grants are **only available to medical doctors and students.**

**Question:** I have applied for an Eka Grant. Can I also apply for an Encouragement Grant or a four-month Research Grant?

- Only one grant may be applied for in one application.

**Question:** Can I apply for one of the Foundation's grants if I have previously applied for and been awarded a grant from the Postdoc Pool? The Pool grant only covers part of the costs, and I would like to apply for a Foundation grant as well, if possible.

- The Foundation does not award further grants simultaneously with a Postdoc Pool grant.

**Question:** The Encouragement Grant is available to "young" researchers working on a doctoral thesis – what does "young" mean? Is there an age limit, or does it refer to being early in your research career?

- Young researcher means early career researcher and does not refer to age.

**Question:** Should grant applications completed online also be printed and sent out to the Finnish Medical Foundation?

- Grants are not sent via mail. All applications are sent in through the online service.

### EKA GRANTS

**Question:** Should the application specify how the money is to be spent?

- Eka Grants and Encouragement Grants do not require a breakdown of grant usage.

**Question:** If you apply for an Eka Grant, can it be transferred into e.g. an Encouragement Grant if that is a "better fit"?



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- No transfers will be made. Applicants must know which grant they are applying for. If you have no publications, apply for an Eka Grant; if you've been published, apply for an Encouragement Grant.

**Question:** Should Eka Grant applications include literary references?

- Literary references are not necessary.

**Question:** Should the thesis subject be submitted before applying for an Eka Grant?

- Submitting is not mandatory.

**Question:** If the public defence of a thesis takes place during the application period, can and should Eka or Encouragement Grants be applied for?

- Applying is not possible, as the thesis will have been finished before May 31.

## ENCOURAGEMENT GRANTS

**Question:** I am applying for an Encouragement Grant for working on a doctoral thesis. Should the application include information about a specific research project or the research plan for the entire thesis?

- Include a research plan for the project you hope to be funded. If you want funding for the thesis, include the thesis research plan; if you seek funding for a smaller project, include the research plan for that project.

## RESEARCH GRANTS

**Question:** Can the research plan be in English?

- The research plan can be in English with the rest of the application in Finnish.

**Question:** I have been awarded an eight-month Research Grant, which I am currently using on a 50% basis, spending half the week on clinical work and half on research. Can I apply for the grant term to be cancelled if I'm unable to spend the awarded grant in its entirety? Should I suspend the research, I would naturally return the unused portion of the grant.

- There are no rules for cancelling a grant term before it ends, due to the general principle that grants are awarded based on applications and that receiving the grant is subject to completing the research described in the application.

**Question:** Can Research Grants be used on drug or laboratory costs?

- Yes, as long as the length of the research period corresponds to the awarded grant.

**Question:** I have understood that 25% of working hours may be spent on other paid work during the research period. Does this apply to the whole four-month period or each month separately?



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- Research Grant guidelines state that a maximum of 25% of working hours may be spent on other paid work during the research period. The purpose is to ensure that applicants can concentrate full-time on research work. The Foundation wishes that any additional work should be divided evenly across the research period.

### RETURNING RESEARCHER GRANTS

**Question:** Can I apply for Returning Researcher Grants afterwards?

- No – the applicant must still be abroad when the application process is started.

### RESEARCH GROUP FOUNDER GRANT

**Question:** In the Research Group Founder Grant application form, the basic information section has a space for the total costs of the project. I am only applying to cover the wages during an 18-month project, with no other costs. Should I insert the annual wage for each year without additional costs, or should this section already include a total of all costs stated by the university, including incidental costs, etc.?

- Please include all costs, making a note of the incidental costs.

**Question:** Research Group Founder Grants are available to early career researchers. By separate request from the applicant, the grant may also be used to cover the wages of another researcher working on the project. The project leader already has an established research career and works primarily on research, not on clinical work. Does this matter if the grant is intended to pay for the wages of additional research staff?

- Research Group Founder Grants can only be awarded to applicants spending half of the year (a total of 18 months in three years) on full-time research work made possible by the Foundation's grant. The grant is not suitable for just hiring an additional researcher or researchers, because the grant is intended to make up for the applicant's lost earnings arising from the leave of absence related to the research period. If funds are left over after the lost earnings have been covered, they may be used for additional costs or for paying additional wages.

### PAYMENT

**Question:** When exactly are the funds paid out?

- Payment date is when the Foundation makes a payment to the account provided by the grant recipient.

### ABANDONED RESEARCH

**Question:** What if the research is abandoned?

- If the research is abandoned, we will evaluate the situation on a case-by-case basis. In such cases we will request a report of how the grant was used and what it accomplished.