

HOW TO APPLY

Aim

Two of the main targets in the further development of the Finnish research system are to promote the profiling of universities into distinct areas of strength and to clarify the collaboration and the division of labour between universities. The Finnish Government's public finances plan for 2015–2018 includes the gradual transfer over 2015–2019 of 50 million euros of central government finances earmarked for funding universities (item 29.40.50 of the State Budget) for allocation through the Academy of Finland (item 29.40.51).

The aim of this funding opportunity is to support and speed up the strategic profiling of Finnish universities in order to improve their capacity for enhancing quality. The funding is fixed-term and intended for measures that strengthen the universities' strategic research fields (incl. new initiatives) and support any related exclusions. Strengthening the profiles of universities will often require close collaboration between universities. The funding is open to all scientific disciplines.

Funding and applicant

The call will be open in January 2015, with a total budget of 50 million euros to be granted for measures supporting the research-related profiling of universities. The multi-year funding decisions will be made in 2015 from the Academy of Finland's 2015 budget authority.

The funding is applied for by universities, each university with its own application.

Applicant universities are requested to submit a plan of action for their profiling measures and division of labour. In addition, the universities must clearly describe their planned cooperation with other universities, research institutes and society at large. The funding will be allocated to the profiling measures described in the universities' action plans.

A profiling measure may, for special reasons, also include costs related to research infrastructures. The key funding instrument here is the funding provided by the Finnish Research Infrastructure Committee at the Academy of Finland. The Academy will not grant overlapping funding for research infrastructures.

The funding can only be used for the profiling measures specified in the application. The Academy will not make advance payments on the funding. The universities can invoice the Academy retroactively for any costs incurred as of 1 February 2015.

Please see [Use of funding](#) on our website for all conditions and guidelines regarding the funding.

Review of applications

The applications will be reviewed by an international panel of experts convened by the Academy of Finland. University management will be called in to be interviewed by the panel during 15–17 April 2015



ACADEMY OF FINLAND

Key considerations will include the concreteness and viability of the action plans and the individual profiling measures proposed.

Funding period

The funding period will start retroactively from 1 February 2015 at the earliest. The funding is granted for no more than four years, which means that the funding will be paid between 2015 and 2019.

Follow-up and reporting

The Academy of Finland's general conditions and guidelines for funding oblige the universities to report on the use of funds. One decision will be made per each application, and the universities are obliged to report on each decision.

The Academy will provide the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture with reports on the use of funding.

The universities must submit to the Academy an accounting report on the use of funds received. For more guidelines, please see the Academy's general funding conditions.

The Academy will appoint an international follow-up group to monitor the implementation of the measures proposed. This will be done by, for example, interviewing university management.

THE APPLICATION

The application consists of the application drafted in the Academy's online services as well as an action plan.

The call is implemented under the full cost model. The Academy's funding contribution comes to 100 per cent, covering the costs in full, which means that the universities will not be required to contribute to the funding. *In the online application, applicants shall therefore only fill in the funding to be applied for from the Academy. The action plan must include full cost estimates for each individual profiling measure as well as any other funding earmarked for the same purpose.*

The overall cost estimate for profiling measures presented in the action plan must be accurate enough to allow the review panel to assess the schedule and scope of the university's plans. The cost estimate for funding to be applied for from the Academy must be specified by type of expenditure.

Action plan

The Academy of Finland will compile a set of basic information on the universities for purposes of the review. The Academy will provide the review panel with details on the universities' resources as well as figures for publications and degrees completed (data compiled by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, material compiled for the Academy's review of the state of scientific research in Finland). This material will be sent for comments to the universities before it is sent to the panel.



The *action plan* shall be written in English and it must include the following information:

- description of and status report on the university's strategy, incl. an overview of the current stage of profiling
- description of the profiling measures for which funding is applied (see below for more on how to describe the measures)
- description of the portion of the university's research areas and volume accounted for by the proposed profiling measures
- description of how the university will monitor the implementation and impact of the profiling measures.

For purposes of the review, the description of *profiling measures* must include, where applicable, the following information in the indicated order:

- description of the measure, the choices and exclusions it contains and how it ties in with the university's strategy; schedule for the implementation
- description of how the division of labour and the collaboration essential for the measure will be implemented together with other Finnish and international organisations, incl. research infrastructure cooperation
- description of the current and the aspired level of research in the concerned field in comparison to the international level, or ways to reach the aspired level; for example, describe the level with the help of a recent research field evaluation conducted at the university
- description of the significance of strategic choices in terms of national-level competence-based growth and other needs in society
- cost estimate, resources plan and an estimate of long-term cost effects; description of how the costs will be covered after the funding will end in 2019.

If the profiling measure is a joint undertaking between two or more universities, *each university must have its own action plan, describe its own contributions and provide its own cost estimate*. It is not possible to submit consortium applications in this call.

The recommended length for the action plan is 10–50 pages, depending on the scope of the university's activities or the scope of the profiling measures.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION, DECISION-MAKING

Competent representatives of the applicant universities submit the funding applications using the Academy of Finland's online services. The representatives will also give a commitment on behalf of the site of research. Applications can be submitted as of 12 January 2015. The call closes on 29 January 2015 at 16.15.

A subcommittee appointed by the Academy Board will make the funding decisions in May 2015.



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MORE INFORMATION

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ADVANCE INFORMATION

The next call for funding applications under this scheme is scheduled for early autumn 2015, with funding decisions expected in early 2016.



Example of the contents of an application

Application by university X

Action plan

- description of and status report on the university's strategy, incl. an overview of the current stage of profiling (a couple of pages)
- description of the portion of the university's research areas and volume accounted for by the proposed profiling measures
- description of how the university will monitor the implementation and impact of the profiling measures
- link to the university's strategy

As part of the action plan: the profiling measures *for which funding is applied*

- description of the measure, the choices and exclusions it contains and how it ties in with the university's strategy; schedule for the implementation
- description of how the division of labour and the collaboration essential for the measure will be implemented together with other Finnish and international organisations, incl. research infrastructure cooperation
- description of the current and the aspired level of research in the concerned field in comparison to the international level, or ways to reach the aspired level; for example, describe the level with the help of a recent research field evaluation conducted at the university
- description of the significance of strategic choices in terms of national-level competence-based growth and other needs in society
- cost estimate, resources plan and an estimate of long-term cost effects; description of how the costs will be covered after the funding will end in 2019

Schematic examples of profiling measures:

- University X aims to strengthen its profile in field P1 and invest in its current area of strength P1.1 and in new initiatives arising therefrom. Field P1.2 has previously been in a prominent role at university X, but it has now been agreed that university Y will focus on and assume responsibility for P1.2 and that university X will decrease its investment in P1.2. University X will establish six new professorships in P1.1 over the next four years.
- University X aims to strengthen its profile in field P2. The aim is to recruit five new professors and a number of other personnel for field P2.1 over the next five years. In field P2.2, university X aims to launch a new research activity (new line of inquiry) together with (domestic or foreign) university Z and research institute W. The estimated volume for this new activity is some xyz million euros per year.
- University X aims to scale down its activities in field P3. Over the next five years, P3 resources will be freed and re-allocated to field P7 as a result of collaboration measures, a redivision of labour and potential retirements.



- University X aims to give up its research infrastructure in field P4 and has authorised research institute 5 to use it. Resources will therefore be freed and re-allocated to fields P1.1 and P2 as a result of increased collaboration and division of labour.
- For each field to be strengthened, the university must describe the current and the aspired level of research in the concerned field in comparison to the international level, or ways to reach the aspired level. The university, for example, can describe the level with the help of a recent research field evaluation conducted at the university
- For each proposed profiling measure, the university must describe the planned cost estimate accurately enough to allow the review panel to assess the schedule and scope of the university's plans
 - o For example, the recruitment of professors in field P1.1 will cost approx. xxx million euros over four years. The increased collaboration, division of labour and potential retirements will lead to savings worth zzz euros, but in a longer timeframe than what is required by the profiling measures. This is why funding to strengthen profiling is needed.
 - o The cost estimate must describe for each profiling measure what the university's core funding in the field is, how it is projected to evolve, how much other funding is available, and how much funding is applied for from the Academy.
 - o In drafting the cost estimate, the university should take into account the level of the funding to strengthen profiling (€50 million) in proportion to the university framework as a whole.
 - o Example:

Field P1/P1.1

- The university's core funding in the field is €18 million in 2014.
- The core funding, which the university will transfer incrementally to the selected field, is €22 million in 2015, €26 million in 2016, €29 million in 2017, €29 million in 2018 and €29 million in 2019.
- The increase in core funding compared to the 2014 level is €4 million in 2015, €8 million in 2016, €11 million in 2017, €11 million in 2018 and €11 million in 2019.
- The other funding (e.g. business companies, the EU, Tekes) follows the same pattern.
- A total of €3 million will be applied for from the Academy of Finland to support this field, distributed in annual instalments as follows: €0.5 million in 2015, €0.5 million in 2016, €1 million in 2017, €0.5 million in 2018 and €0.5 million in 2019.

Field P1/P1.2

- The university's core funding in the field is €16 million in 2014.
- The core funding is €14 million in 2015, €10 million in 2016, €10 million in 2017, €10 million in 2018 and €10 million in 2019.
- The decrease in core funding compared to the 2014 level is €2 million in 2015, €6 million in 2016, €6 million in 2017, €6 million in 2018 and €6 million in 2019.
- No funding will be applied for from the Academy of Finland.



- Other: The domestic university Y will apply for Academy funding to support the development of this field and cover, for instance, costs of staff mobility as a result of the division of labour.

Field P2/P2.2

- The university's core funding in the field is €10 million in 2014.
- The core funding is €12 million in 2015, €15 million in 2016, €15 million in 2017, €15 million in 2018 and €15 million in 2019.
- The increase in core funding compared to the 2014 level is €2 million in 2015, €5 million in 2016, €5 million in 2017, €5 million in 2018 and €5 million in 2019.
- A total of €6 million will be applied for from the Academy of Finland, distributed in annual instalments as follows: €0 million in 2015, €1 million in 2016, €2 million in 2017, €2 million in 2018 and €1 million in 2019.
- Other:
- The estimated funding provided by domestic research institute Z for the profiling measure totals €3 million for 2015–2019.
- The estimated funding provided by a foreign organisation for the profiling measure totals €2 million for 2015–2019.