
English version

Key information about the Internal Call for Return Grants

Application opening date: 1. 10. 2025 at 12:00 p.m.

Application closing date: 3. 11. 2025 at 12:00 p.m.

Full project name: Returns at the CU

Project registration number: CZ.02.01.01/00/24_037/0013839



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Learn about the important aspects of the Internal Call for Return Grants

Purpose of the Call: The aim is to ensure that career interruptions due to maternity/parental leave, long-term illness, or long-term care for a child or close person do not result in the termination or significant slowdown of the professional development of researchers with high potential for qualified employment. Support will be provided through internal research grants.

The grant scheme will assess, among other things, the potential of the project - the professional level and scientific quality of the research proposal, relevance of the research proposal and institutional benefit, the objectives and planned activities of the return grant (e.g. mobility, education, etc.) and the expected results and outputs; alignment with the department's research plans/themes addressed within the grant applicant's organizational unit (e.g. department); the compatibility with infrastructure and equipment at the workplace where the grant will be implemented.

Mandatory Activity – Implementation of Return Grants: Research, so called return grants are intended for researchers returning to their research careers after a career break, in order to ensure that career interruptions due to maternity/parental leave, long-term illness, or long-term care for a child or close person do not result in the termination or significant slowdown of the professional development of researchers with high potential for qualified employment. Each return grant may receive up to CZK 10 million over a three-year period, covering all eligible activities.

Career Break Definition:

- Minimum duration of 180 calendar days during which the researcher (return grant applicant) could not fully carry out R&D activities.
- May be interrupted temporarily (e.g., if personal obstacles cease).
- The duration of a career break immediately before the interruption and after the interruption is added together, provided that the interruptions of the career break must not exceed 30 calendar days in total.
- The minimum duration is extended by the number of interruption days (e.g., 30-day interruption ? minimum 210 days).

Timeline:

- Expected call launch: October 1, 2025
- Earliest project start: February 2026

Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants must the date of the return grant submission be:

- Ph.D. students or holders of a Ph.D. (or equivalent), and at the same time
- currently on a career break or have returned from a career break within the last 12 months

Project administration will be conducted in English.

Optional Activities within the return grant

- **Mentorship**
 - Recommended especially for junior researchers or Ph.D. students. However, mentorship may also be relative for senior researchers, especially in the initial part of a return grant.
 - Mentor provides expert guidance and methodological support in the implementation of research activities and the achievement of the set objectives of the return grant.
 - Max. involvement: 0.2 FTE.
 - Mentor must be a senior researcher (min. 7 years post-Ph.D.) with adequate experience in the field of the given return grant.
- **Supportive Professional Team**
 - Max. team size: 5 people (1 PI + 4 members)
 - Total FTE for team members (excluding PI): max. 2 FTE
 - The principal investigator may also involve other members of the supportive professional team in the grant solution - expert/technical/other relevant workers who, under his/her leadership, participate in the implementation of the return grant (for these workers, this is no longer a return from a career break).
- **Childcare or Caregiver Contribution**
 - The purpose is to contribute to expenses that are expected to be incurred by the principal investigator of the return grant in connection with long-term personal care of a child who has not yet started compulsory preschool education, or in connection with long-term personal care of a close person, at a time when the principal investigator of the return grant will implement the return grant and will not be able to care for the child or close person.
 - Not available if eligible for "hlídáckovné" under the upcoming amendment to the Higher Education Act.
- **Mobility Abroad**
 - Through the mobility of the principal investigator of the return grant to foreign organizations, it is expected to increase the qualifications and professional knowledge of the principal investigator of the return grant, know-how transfer to the Czech research organization, and networking with experts from foreign workplaces. The long-term goal is the internationalization of research.
 - When determining the destinations of outbound mobility, it is also necessary to respect existing foreign cooperation.
 - Mobility can be split into two parts, not exceeding the maximum duration of mobility in total.
- **Further Education**
 - The aim of this activity is to provide the principal investigator of the return grant with the necessary training that will enable him to develop the competencies necessary for a successful career in R&D. This mainly includes professional training, as well as training in team leadership, grant application processing, management skills, etc.
 - Includes:
 - Professional training (can be abroad)
 - Soft skills training (only in the Czech Republic)

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