

Frequently Asked Questions about the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme 2010

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1. Is there an age limit or are there any other time-limits for applicants under the scheme?

There are no age limits, but there are set limits for the number of years that have elapsed since the award of a doctorate. For Veni applicants the time-limit is 3 years, for Vidi applicants 8 years, and for Vici applicants 15 years from the award of the doctorate. Starting on 1 January 2009, professors are permitted to submit Vidi applications (new) and Vici applications (now without time-limit).

2. Can foreign researchers apply?

The scheme is open to researchers of all nationalities working anywhere in the world.

3. Is it possible to apply from abroad without being an employee of a Dutch research institute?

Yes, but the research must take place at one of the Dutch host institutions listed in the brochure, and the researchers concerned must become employees of that institution. To set up an Iris account, applicants have to select a Dutch research institute. Any applicant who is not yet employed by a Dutch institution when setting up the account should select the one at which s/he plans to conduct the research. The applicant must, however, always give his/her current address in the application itself.

4. Can a researcher with a permanent contract of employment apply?

Researchers can apply irrespective of the nature of their current employment.

5. Can researchers apply for a Veni grant even if they have not yet received a doctorate?

A researcher who has not yet been awarded a doctorate can apply but the application must be accompanied by an official declaration by the entire manuscript committee that the manuscript of the thesis has been approved.

6. Do applications always have to be submitted via the IRIS system?

Yes, use of the Iris system is compulsory. To submit a new application, go to the website (www.nwo.nl/vi) and select the Veni, Vidi or Vici page. Once the round has begun (around two months before the deadline), you will then be able to click on a link to Iris. A crucial preparatory step in submitting an application via Iris is to convert the completed application form to the compulsory PDF format (see question 7). The only exception to this rule concerns applications within the medical sciences. The Medical Sciences division uses a similar system called ProjectNet, to which access is provided via the division's own website (www.zonmw.nl).

7. Is PDF format really necessary?

Yes. PDF is the only format accepted by the Iris system because it is the only one that guarantees that the files received by NWO are identical to those sent by the applicants. If you experience any technical problems with conversion from Word to PDF, contact your own computer support service or NWO's Iris helpdesk: iris@nwo.nl or tel. 0900-6964747 (15 eurocents p/m). The helpdesk is open on weekdays between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Dutch time).

8. Does the maximum number of words for the project application ("proposed research") include the bibliographical references?

The maximum number of words is excluding references.

9. Can a Veni applicant include the cost of additional research manpower in the budget?

No, the costs of additional research staff cannot be included. Recipients of Veni grants are not supposed to set up research teams. Since Veni grants are designed to help individual researchers, applicants must include only their own salary costs in the budget. N.B. This is a key difference between Veni grants and ones under the Vidi and Vici schemes, where recipients are allowed to appoint additional research staff.

10. Can the grant-aided research be done on a part-time basis?

Part-time research is a possibility under the scheme. In the case of Veni grants, the duration of the project can be extended by a maximum of 1 year (from 3 to 4 years) if the research is being done part-time (0.75 fte). In the case of Vidi and Vici grants, no time extension is permitted but there is the possibility of appointing additional research staff.

11. Is it permissible to apply for two forms of grant simultaneously (e.g. Veni and Vidi)?

No, candidates are not allowed to have applications for more than one form of Innovational Research grant running simultaneously. For example: in 2006 a Vidi candidate was not allowed to apply for the first Veni round in that year because the Veni and Vidi rounds ran concurrently (with deadlines in January). However, the Vidi candidate could apply for a grant in the next Veni round, because the outcome of the Vidi application was announced (in July) before the deadline for the second Veni round (in September).

12. Can the applicant's entire salary be included in the budget, or must deductions be made for time spent on non-research activities, such as teaching?

If the applicant is to devote no more than 25% of his/her working time to non-research activities (teaching/administration/management), the entire salary may be covered by the grant. If more than this amount of time is to be spent on such activities, the grant application should relate only to the proportion of working time to be directly devoted to the research.

For example:

- Applicant A has a full-time appointment and devotes 50% of her time to research and the other 50% to teaching duties and other tasks. She can apply for grant to cover 50% of her gross salary (0.5 fte).
- Applicant B has a 0.5 fte appointment and devotes 0.4 fte (80%) to research. He can apply for grant to cover his entire salary (0.5 fte).
- Applicant C has a 0.6 fte appointment and devotes 0.2 fte (33%) to teaching duties and administration. She can apply for grant to cover the costs of 0.4 fte.

13. Can the budget exceed the maximum available subsidy?

The budget can exceed the maximum stated in the brochure (Veni € 250,000, Vidi € 800,000, Vici € 1,500,000), but NWO's contribution will never be more than that amount. Where the budget exceeds the maximum, the institution (or a third party) must send NWO an authorised letter guaranteeing to meet the excess costs. The letter should be sent by post and timed to coincide with submission of the application.

14. What are the cost guidelines for employing an additional PhD student or postdoc research assistant?

The NWO guidelines for the annual gross salary of a PhD student (based on salary scales at 1 January 2009 and excluding associated costs) are 1st year: € 24,504; 2nd year: € 28,548; 3rd year: € 29,904; 4th year: € 31,344.

Standard salary scale for PhD students at Dutch universities in 2009:

	1-1-2009
1st year	2,042
2nd year	2,379
3rd year	2,492
4th year	2,612

The gross salary of a postdoc depends on age and experience: at scale 11.0, the annual gross salary costs are € 38,340 (excluding associated costs). The figure included in the budget may be more or less than this, depending on the individual postdoc's experience.

N.B. The figures given here are purely indicative. The actual salary scale will be set by the university.

15. When does an institutional guarantee need to be provided?

An institutional guarantee is compulsory only for applications submitted in rounds taking place in or before 2008. It must be provided by the highest administrative body in the host institution. In the case of the universities, this is the Executive Board. The institutional guarantee will relate to the integration of the research into the overall research programme of the host institution and possibly to the future employment of the applicant. A form for the institutional guarantee can be downloaded from the website (www.nwo.nl/vi).

16. What about conditions of grant?

From the beginning of 2009, institutional guarantees will not longer be compulsory. They will be replaced by specific grant conditions (e.g. regarding employment by the institution). The exact conditions will be sent to applicants along with the award letter.

17. Is the knowledge utilisation section compulsory?

No, it is not obligatory to include a knowledge utilisation section in the application. However, if you do so, it will only be taken into account in the ranking of your application if the effect of doing so is in your favour. If the effect is negative, the section will be disregarded.

18. How should I submit an application which does not fit neatly into the field of study covered by any one NWO division?

In the past (2004 – 2008, such cross-disciplinary or 'interdivisional' applications were dealt with by one division with input from extra referees and committee members where necessary. From the start of 2009, NWO is offering the option of submitting such applications to a separate contact point. Interdivisional applications will be handled in accordance with procedures similar to those used when applications are submitted to a particular division, but there will be a separate committee to rank the interdivisional proposals in comparison with each other.

19. What is meant by domains?

NWO has decided that, from the start of 2009, applications will be subjected to an additional ranking within domains. The aim is to increase the chance of selecting the best proposals across the whole field of scholarship. By definition, a domain embraces a broader field of scholarship than that covered by any single NWO division. Three domains have been designated: **Alpha-Gamma** for applications in the humanities and social sciences, **Beta** for earth sciences, chemical sciences, physical sciences, physics and technical sciences, and **Life Sciences** for life sciences, agricultural and food sciences, biochemistry and medical sciences. Interdivisional applications will also be ranked within one of these domains.

20. Should I submit my application to a division or a domain?

The application form asks you to say which division and which domain should deal with your application. If, on receiving your application, NWO feels that a different division or domain would be more appropriate, the secretary for the round will contact you. In the Iris system, you need only select a division.

21. What does the form mean by 'non-referees'?

This relates to an optional section of the application which gives you the chance to designate up to 3 people who should NOT be asked to assess your application because you believe that they might be prejudiced against you or it. These are the people termed 'non-referees' in the form. Do NOT name these people in the electronic version of your application. Their names and addresses should be uploaded in electronic form in a separate document in Iris or ProjectNet. For further information, see the explanatory notes accompanying the application form.

22. Can I send publications?

No, publications are not required and will not be taken into account.

23. When can I apply for an extension to the time-limit for applications on the grounds of care responsibilities or training in a clinical specialism?

If you want to apply for an extension to the career deadline, you can say so on the application form. This is necessary only if the period that has elapsed since the award of your doctorate is longer than that stated in the brochure. Before you submit your application, contact the coordinator of the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme to discuss your chances of obtaining an extension (vi@nwo.nl).

a) Care responsibilities

An extension on the grounds of care responsibilities will be granted only if you can show that you are taking or have taken parental, maternity or care leave, or that you have combined a part-time research appointment with care responsibilities. The care responsibilities must have related to a child/children who was/were part of your own household. The rules for calculating the extension are stated in full in the explanatory notes on the grant application forms. They relate only to the period since the award of your doctorate (the effective research career).

- Female researchers who have given birth to a child/children are granted a standard extension of 18 months per child.
- Male researchers are granted an extension of up to 1 year per child born in the period since the doctoral award, but only to compensate for formal reductions in working hours.
- In the case of sick leave or leave taken to care for blood relatives or relatives by marriage in the first degree, compensation will be given for any formal reduction in working hours.
- **The maximum extension permitted by NWO to any applicant will be 5 years,** and the maximum for each child will be 18 months. Even if an applicant has taken care leave and trained in a clinical specialism during the relevant period, the permitted extension will never exceed 5 years.

b) Training in a clinical specialism

You can also apply for an extension of the time-limit if you have undertaken training in a clinical specialism during the relevant period. Training to become an officially recognised and registered veterinary specialist, dental specialist (oral surgery & orthodontics) or hospital pharmacist also counts under the extension clause. The following rules apply:

- You can add the total aggregated time spent on training in the clinical specialism since the award of your doctorate to the normal time-limit for applying for the Veni, Vidi or Vici grant.
- If you undertook medical training and research simultaneously, you can calculate the extension in the same sort of way as if you had had care responsibilities.
- For example: Following the award of your doctorate, you spent 3 years training in a clinical specialism and at the same time spent 10% (0.1 fte) of your time on academic research. In that case, the time-limit for your grant application can be extended by 90% (0.9 fte) of 3 years. In the case of a Veni application, this means that the time-limit of 3 years following the award of the doctorate can be extended by 32 months (90% of 3 years).
- The maximum extension permitted by NWO will be 5 years. Even if an applicant has taken care leave and trained in a clinical specialism during the relevant period, the permitted extension will never exceed 5 years.

Full-time training	Part-time training/research
... years x 1.0 fte training x 1 year extension	... years x 0.? fte training x 1 year extension