

Frequently Asked Questions about the Talent Scheme

April 2018

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1. Is there an age limit or are there any other limits for Veni, Vidi and Vici applicants?

There are no age limits, but there are set limits for the number of years that have elapsed since the award of your doctorate.

- Veni-applicants must have obtained their doctorate within the last three years. The 2019 Veni round is open to researchers who meet this criterion on 1 January 2019.
- Vidi-applicants must have obtained their doctorate within the last eight years. The 2018 Vidi round is open to researchers who meet this criterion on 1 October 2018.
- Vici-applicants must have obtained their doctorate within the last fifteen years. The 2019 Vici round is open to researchers who meet this criterion on 1 March 2019.

2. Can foreign researchers apply?

The scheme is open to researchers of all nationalities, working anywhere in the world. Please note that the research must take place at one of the Dutch host institutions listed in the Call for Proposals. Starting in 2018, NWO will ask candidates for an **'embedding guarantee'** from the start of the new application rounds for Veni- (2019) and Vidi-funding (2018) (*see question 18 in this FAQ*).

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 Call for proposals, and the researchers concerned must become employees of that institution. To set up an ISAAC account, applicants have to select a Dutch research institute. Applicants who are not yet employed by a Dutch institution when setting up the account should select the institution at which they plan to conduct the research. Starting in 2018, NWO will ask candidates for an **'embedding guarantee'** from the start of the new application rounds for Veni- (2019) and Vidi-funding (2018).

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

Researchers can apply irrespective of the nature of their current employment. There are no restrictions with respect to types of positions. Starting in 2018, NWO will ask candidates for an **'embedding guarantee'** from the start of the new application rounds for Veni- (2019) and Vidi-funding (2018) (*see question 18 in this FAQ*).

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

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

6. Can I submit an application if I hold two PhDs?

Researchers who have obtained two separate doctorates and would like to know if they can still submit an application are requested to contact the secretariat of the Talent Scheme, via vi@nwo.nl.

7. Do I have to submit via the ISAAC system?

Yes. The use of the ISAAC 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 call is open for applications (around two months before the submission deadline), you will then be able to click on a link to [ISAAC](#). A crucial preparatory step in submitting an application via ISAAC is converting the completed application form to PDF format (see Question 8).

The only exception to the compulsory submission via ISAAC is for applications to ZonMw: the Medical Sciences domain uses a similar system called ProjectNet, to which access is provided via their website (www.zonmw.nl).

8. Is use of PDF format really necessary?

Yes. PDF is the only format accepted by the electronic system ISAAC because it is the only file format that guarantees that the files received by NWO are identical to those sent by the applicants. *The files you upload may not contain any security locks or bookmarks.*

Should you experience any technical problems with conversion from Word to PDF, please contact your institution's computer support service or NWO's ISAAC help desk: Isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl or +31 20 346 7179. The help desk is available on weekdays between 11.00 hours and 17.00 hours (Central European Time). In case of technical problems when submitting to ZonMw (ProjectNet), please contact the ProjectNet helpdesk: projectnet@zonmw.nl or +31 70 349 5178.

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

The maximum number of words *does not* include the reference list, but *does include* all words in the text: including references in the text, and words in tables, graphs and images.

10. Can a Veni applicant include the cost of additional research staff in the budget?

No, the costs of additional research staff cannot be included in a Veni application. The applicant can, however, include his/her own salary costs because it is an individual grant.

NB: The appointment of additional scientific personnel is possible in the case of Vidi and Vici grants.

11. 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 one year (from three to four years) if the research

is being done part-time (0.75 FTE). In the case of Vidi and Vici grants, the project duration may not be extended, but there is the possibility of appointing additional research staff.

12. Can I apply for two types of grant simultaneously (e.g., Veni and Vidi)?

No. Candidates are not allowed to have applications for more than one type of Talent Scheme grant running simultaneously. For example: a candidate who, in principle, is an eligible applicant for both Veni and Vidi and who has applied for a Vidi grant in 2017, is not allowed to also apply for a Veni in the 2018 round. The reason is that the outcome of the Vidi application is not known before the submission deadline for the Veni round.

13. 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 an applicant is to devote no more than 25% of his/her working time to non-research activities (e.g., teaching, administration, management, or research outside of the subsidized project) and the other 75% or more on the research project, the entire salary may be covered by the grant. If more than 25% of their time is to be spent on other activities, the grant application should budget only the proportion of working time to be devoted directly to the research project.

Three example calculations:

- 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 the 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 the grant to cover the costs of 0.4 FTE.

NB: In the case of a Veni grant it is not possible to appoint additional scientific personnel. After the awarding of the grant the Veni researcher must request NWO's permission for the appointment of any additional non-scientific personnel.

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

To determine the gross salary you should consult the actual scale and increment under which the researcher is appointed. For subsequent years you can take into account the expected incremental increases and other salary increases insofar as these are expected according to the current CAO-NU (Collective Labour Agreement Dutch Universities).

15. Can the project budget exceed the maximum available subsidy amount?

The project budget can exceed the maximum grant amount, but NWO's contribution will never exceed the amount in the call (Veni € 250,000; Vidi € 800,000; Vici € 1,500,000). If the research project's budget exceeds the grant maximum, it should include co-financing from your institution and/or a third party. For more information, see Question 16, below.

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

If your host institution or a third party contributes to your project *in-kind* or *in-cash* the application must be accompanied by an authorized letter, guaranteeing that this funding will be provided. This co-financing letter must explicitly state the (valued) amount contributed. An example of this co-financing letter can be found in ISAAC and on the website with the other supporting documents of the Call for Proposals (www.nwo.nl/vi). The signed co-financing letter should be sent to NWO via the ISAAC system as a separate PDF document. These annexes will not be sent to referees or committee members and will not be taken into consideration during the application assessments.

NB: The co-financing letter also applies if the institution pays the salary, or a part thereof, of the applicant and/or of other researchers that work on the Talent Scheme project (only insofar as it concerns FTE that is devoted to the Talent Scheme project).

Please note that the co-financing letter is also required if the overall project budget of your proposal does not exceed the maximum contribution by NWO (i.e., in such cases NWO's contribution will be less than the maximum grant amount).

17. What are the conditions for granting?

Specific grant conditions apply (e.g., regarding employment by the institution). The exact conditions will be sent to successful applicants along with their award letter.

18. Under what conditions and how should the embedding guarantee be included in the application?

Starting in 2018, NWO will ask candidates for an '**embedding guarantee**' from the start of the new application rounds for Veni- (2019) and Vidi-funding (2018).

- The deadline for submitting the full application for the **Vidi-round is 4 October 2018**.
- The deadline for submitting the full application for the **Veni-round is 8 January 2019**.
- *The deadline for submitting the pre-proposal for the Veni-Round with the domain Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and the domain Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES) is **28 August 2018** (pay attention that the Veni pre-proposal applies only to the two before mentioned domains SSH and AES).*

The embedding guarantee forms should be available online early Mai 2018 on the website of the NWO Talent Scheme (www.nwo.nl/vi) and can be uploaded for the Vidi- and Veni-round. The embedding guarantee form is to be filled out, signed and uploaded as a separate pdf in ISAAC. For more information on the embedding guarantee, please look at our website: www.nwo.nl/vi

*** Please be aware of the following:** The domain Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and the domain Applied and Engineering Sciences (AES) start a pilot with a pre-proposal during the Veni-round 2019. The deadline for the pre-proposals is 28 August 2018. This means that for these two domains the embedding guarantee has to be uploaded together with the pre-proposal application on 28 August (for more information see our website: www.nwo.nl/vi)

19. Is the knowledge utilisation section compulsory?

Yes. All Talent Scheme applications will, in addition to assessing the quality of the candidate and the quality of the research proposal, be judged on the aspect of knowledge utilisation. The assessment of knowledge utilisation will count for 20% of the overall assessment. If a researcher is of the opinion that the proposed research does not offer opportunities for knowledge utilisation then he/she should explain why knowledge utilisation is not applicable for the project. The selection committee will assess this argumentation.

20. How should I submit an application which does not fit neatly into a research field covered by any one NWO domain?

NWO offers the option of submitting such an application to a separate cross-domain committee. Cross-domain applications will be handled in accordance with procedures similar to those used when applications are submitted to a NWO domain, but there will be a separate committee to rank the cross-domain proposals in comparison with one another.

21. What is meant by domains?

The application form asks you to indicate which NWO domain should deal with your application. You indicate this domain also in ISAAC. If, upon receiving your application, NWO feels that a different domain would be more appropriate, the secretary for the programme round will contact you.

22. What is meant by 'non-referees'?

This is an optional part of the application. Non-referees are people who you do *not* want to assess your application because you believe that they might be prejudiced against you or your research. Please do *not* name these people anywhere in your application. Should you want to submit non-referees, write their names and addresses *only* in an electronic form that you upload as a separate document to ISAAC or ProjectNet. Please also consult the explanatory notes specific to the relevant call.

23. Can I submit publications together with my application?

No. Publications are not requested and will not be taken into account. Likewise, any recommendation letters added to the application will *not* be forwarded to the assessment committee or the external reviewers. Please refrain from submitting publications or recommendation letters.

24. How should I calculate the median impact factor of the research field?

It is only compulsory to calculate the median impact factor if you have mentioned impact factors of journals on your publication list.

Information on the average impact factors of the different research fields can, among other websites, be found on the 'ISI Web of Science' website. Look under 'Additional resources' and then 'Journal Citation Reports'. Then choose 'subject category' and finally 'view a group of journals by subject category' to find all kinds of information about the specified category, including the median impact factor. Applicants may use data from different categories to calculate the average impact factor of their research field.

25. Am I eligible for an extension to the time limit for applications on the grounds of care responsibilities, pregnancy, illness, and/or training in a clinical specialism?

If you want to make use of an extension of the maximum time limit since you received your PhD, you must indicate this on your application form. Please do so only if the period that has elapsed since the awarding of your doctorate exceeds the maximum number of years stated in the brochure for the relevant call (see also Question 1, above, and the call text).

Before submitting your application, you must contact the coordinator of the Talent Scheme to request an extension (vi@nwo.nl). Extension requests can be submitted throughout the. Please

note that the calculation of months of research and other activities that must be filled out on the application form (the Effective Research Time) bear no relevance to the rules concerning extensions.

The maximum (cumulative) extension of the submission deadline is five years.

Regardless of any extensions granted, applications must always be submitted before the deadline of the published call.

Extensions do not affect the maximum number of times a researcher can apply to a grant (two times for Veni, two times for Vidi, and three times for Vici).

Extensions may be granted on the following grounds:

a) Pregnancy and care responsibilities children

An extension on the grounds of childcare should be supported by the signed parent-declaration form ([parent-declaration](#)), in which the applicant declares that the child or children are part of his or her household.

- Extension for biological mothers
Biological mothers who have given birth to one or more children are granted a standard extension of eighteen months per child. This extension is a compensation for the duration of the pregnancy, including the child-birth and the parental care and is irrespective of any parental leave taken and/or a reduction in working hours.
- Extension for other parents
Other parents (fathers and non-biological mothers) are granted a standard extension of six months per child that is part of the applicant's household. This period is a compensation for the duration of child care required and is irrespective of parental leave taken and/or a reduction in working hours.

b) Care leave

An extension on the grounds of care responsibilities will be granted only if you can provide documentation that proves that you have taken care leave.

- In case of care leave taken in order 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 formal reduction in working hours should always be supported by documents from the Personnel Department of your employer.

<i>Calculation table compensation parental leave/care leave</i>	Full-time care responsibilities	Part-time care responsibilities
Children or blood relatives or relatives by marriage in the first degree	... months x 1.0 FTE care	... months x 0.? FTE care

c) Illness

In the case of prolonged illness the formal reduction in working hours will be compensated (see for the calculation the table below). The formal reduction in working hours should always be supported by official documentation from the Personnel Department of your employer.

Full-time absence due to illness	Part-time absence due to illness
... months x 1.0 FTE sick leave	... months x 0.? FTE sick leave

d) 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. For the complete [list of clinical specialisms](#) eligible for the extension scheme we kindly refer you to our website. The following rules apply to the determination of the extension:

- You may add the total aggregated time (FTE) 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 specialist medical training and research simultaneously, you should calculate the extension in the same way as if you had had care responsibilities (see table at 25a, above).
- For example: Following the award of your doctorate, you spent three 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 three years. In the case of a Veni application, this means that the time limit of three years following the award of the doctorate can be extended by 32 months (90% of three years).
- An application for an extension of the submission period on the basis of training in a clinical specialism should always be supported by documents from the Personnel department of the employer that issued the formal reduction in working hours (start date, end date and FTE during this period), along with a final examination of the training or proof of your BIG or KNMG registration.

Full-time training as specialist	Part-time training/research
...months x 1.0 FTE training	...months x 0.? FTE training