

Frequently Asked Questions about the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme

November 2017

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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 a doctorate.

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

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 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. Applicant 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.

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.

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 Innovational Research Incentives Scheme, via vi@nwo.nl.

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

Yes, 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 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 tel. +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 references, but *does include* all 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, as 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 form of Innovative Research Incentives 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, because 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, the application must be accompanied by an authorized letter, guaranteeing that this funding will be provided. The guarantee must explicitly state the (valued) amount contributed. A sample letter for this guarantee can be found in ISAAC and on the website (www.nwo.nl/vi).

This guarantee 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 guarantee also applies if the institution pays the salary, or a part thereof, of the applicant and/or of other researchers that work on the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme project (only insofar as it concerns FTE that is devoted to the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme project).

Please note that a guarantee 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. After being awarded a grant, can I decide to carry out my research at an institute in the Netherlands other than the one I stated in the application?

After you have been awarded a grant, you will discuss the embedding of your research at the intended host institution. Eventually you will draw up an agreement about this (a so-called embedding guarantee) in which the host institution can, for example, state which perspectives there are for the line of research and the candidate after the grant period ends. It may be that your research could be well-embedded at other host institutions than the one you originally intended, and that different institutions offer different embedding perspectives. As a result, it might be interesting to carry out your research at one of these other institutions. However, it is important to reach a proper agreement with NWO if you want to switch host institutions: you must demonstrate that your research is at least equally well-suited to the other institution. After all, the embedding of your research was one of the factors the committee took into account when assessing your application.

19. Is the knowledge utilisation section compulsory?

Yes. All Innovational Research Incentives 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 does the form mean 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 award 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 Innovational Research Incentives Scheme to request an extension (vi@nwo.nl).*** Extension requests can be submitted throughout the year. Please include the date of your doctorate with your request, the date(s) of birth of your child(ren) (if applicable), and any required supporting documents (see below).

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 published call deadline.

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

Extensions may be granted on the following grounds:

a) Care responsibilities or pregnancy

An extension on the grounds of care responsibilities will be granted only if you can show that you have taken or are currently taking parental, maternity or care leave, or that you have combined a part-time research appointment with care responsibilities.

- Pregnancy/parental leave for women:
 - Female researchers who have given birth to one or more children are granted a standard extension of eighteen months per child, irrespective of the length of the pregnancy leave and/or parental leave and irrespective of when the child(ren) was/were born.
- Parental leave for men:
 - Male researchers are granted an extension of up to one year per child to compensate for registered formal reductions —if any— in their working hours in the period since their doctoral award, irrespective of when the child(ren) was/were born.
 - Parental leave for men must concern children who are part of the applicant’s household.
 - Male researchers should demonstrate the formal and verifiable reduction in working hours by submitting documents from the Personnel department of the relevant employer.
- Care leave:
 - In the case of 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 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

b) Illness

In the case of prolonged illness the formal reduction in working hours will be compensated (see table below). The formal reduction in working hours should always be supported by submitting documents 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

c) 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