



ERC grants at Ghent University

Sixth Meeting of the WG 2 Finance
COST Targeted Network TN1302: BESTPRAC

Dirk De Craemer
Ghent University



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Specific policy measures

- Each ERC grantee @ Ghent University is offered a full time research professorship;
- The rank depends on the seniority and output:
 - Assistant professor (docent tenure track);
 - Associate professor (hoofddocent);
 - Full professor (hoogleraar);
 - Senior full professor (gewoon hoogleraar).
- Teaching load limited to max. 8 ECTS credits per semester;
- To qualify for a full time research professorship, an ERC grantee has to move to Ghent University within the 1st year of the grant at the latest;
- Host institution of ERC grant = Ghent University (including VIB-departments at Ghent University);
- In case the ERC grantee is already professor @ Ghent University:
 - Financial support to reduce the teaching load to max. 8 ECTS credits per semester by hiring visiting lecturers;

Services offered to applicants

- Team of 4 research managers offer administrative support to researchers who want to submit an ERC grant application;
- At central level, a consultancy service is hired on request, to screen the CV and the nearly finished project proposals;
- At the start of the grant, an intake meeting is scheduled and administrative and financial modalities (FP7 / H2020 / internal) are discussed and explained;
- At least yearly meetings with PI and his staff are scheduled to discuss the progress of the expenditures and the type of expenditures planned;

ERC grantees @ Ghent University

- In FP7:
 - Starting grants: 18
 - Consolidator grants: 4
 - Synergy grants: 0
 - Advanced grants: 5
 - Proof of concept: 6
- In H2020:
 - Starting grants: 9 (+ 2)
 - Consolidator grants: 6
 - Advanced grants: 2
 - Proof of concept: 5
- Starting grant followed by consolidator grant: 3

Grant portability issues

- Only one recent case so far:
 - Personnel costs: some researchers follow the PI to Ghent University and receive a new employment contract; employment contracts of the others are taken over by host institution;
 - In kind contributions: no;
 - Subcontracting: no;
 - Linked third parties: no;
 - Access to research infrastructure: no;
 - Other direct costs: depreciation rules not relevant in this grant;
- Financial reporting by first host institution till end of stay of PI;
- Transfer of remaining funds;
- Financial reporting by Ghent University: reporting period starts immediately (subsequent to reporting period of first host);
- No issues expected;

Remarks from auditors sofar

- Only audits on ERC grants under FP7:
 - In some cases taxes were still included in travel expenses => correction;
 - Gifts for helpers were considered ineligible => correction;
 - Membership and subscription fees going beyond project duration => pro rata correction;
 - Extra information concerning Occupational accident insurance fee and Pension insurance fee which are included in the gross salary => proof of cost per staff member had to be provided;
- To our experience, ERC projects are treated in the same way as other FP7 projects when it comes to audits.

Conclusions

- Ghent University is an attractive host institution, especially in the grant proposal phase and the early phase of a ERC grant.
- Portability issues: only one case so far; no real issues.
- ERC projects are treated in the same way as other FP7 projects when it comes to audits.
- No experience yet regarding audits of H2020 ERC grants.
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Thank you

Dirk De Craemer
Head of the Research Co-ordination Office
Ghent University
Dirk.DeCraemer@UGent.be