



FAQ, ERC 2016 Calls

ERC Starting Grant (StG)

No	Question	Answer
1.	What are eligible career breaks that are considered for the extension of the eligibility window?	<p>Eligible career breaks that can be considered for the extension of the eligibility window are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maternity or paternity leave, - Long-term illness (over ninety days for the Principal Investigator or a close family member), - Clinical training, - National service. <p>All these circumstances need to be properly documented.</p> <p>For more information, see section '<i>Eligibility criteria</i>' of the ERC Work Programme 2016.</p>
2.	What is the cut-off date for eligible career breaks that are considered for the extension of the eligibility window?	The cut-off date for eligible circumstances considered for the extension of the eligibility window is the call deadline.
3.	Which is the date to be considered for the granting of the PhD (or equivalent degree)?	<p>The reference date for calculating the eligibility period should be the date of the actual award according to the national rules in the country where the degree was awarded.</p> <p>In the case of applicants having been awarded several PhDs, the reference date is the award date of the first PhD.</p>
4.	What will happen if the PhD certificate is not submitted together with the proposal?	As long as no PhD document or equivalent is uploaded in the Participant Portal Submission Service (PPSS) , it will not be possible to validate/submit the proposal. A warning message will inform the applicant of the missing document. If another document is uploaded instead and the PhD certificate is finally missing in the proposal, the proposal is not eligible and will not be evaluated.

5.	Is a Medical Doctor degree equivalent to a PhD degree?	For medical doctors (or applicants holding a degree in medicine), a medical doctor degree will not be accepted by itself as equivalent to a PhD award . To be considered an eligible Principal Investigator, medical doctors (or applicants holding a degree in medicine) need to provide the certificates of both a medical doctor degree and a PhD or proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship, professorship appointment). Additionally, candidates must also provide information on their research experience (including peer reviewed publications) in order to further substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD. In these cases, the certified date of the medical doctor degree completion plus two years is the time reference for calculation of the eligibility time-window (i.e. 4-9 years past the medical doctor degree for Starters).
6.	What are degrees equivalent to a PhD ?	<p>In order to be eligible to apply to the ERC Starting Grant a Principal Investigator must have been awarded a PhD or equivalent doctoral degree. It is recognised that there are some other doctoral titles that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD in certain fields. All of them have similar content requirements. These cases will not be automatically considered eligible or ineligible but examined individually, as part of the ERCEA's decision on eligibility. First professional degrees will not be considered in themselves as PhD-equivalent, even if recipients carry the title "Doctor".</p> <p>For more information please consult the <i>ERC policy on PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees</i> in the ERC Work Programme 2016 Annex 2.</p>
7.	In some countries, ' habilitation ' is a scientific degree awarded to formally acknowledge the achievement of research independence. Are holders of this degree eligible to apply for an ERC Starting Grant?	<p>There is no eligibility restriction to holders of a 'habilitation'. The reference date used for calculation of the applicant's eligibility is the PhD award date or medical doctor degree award date.</p> <p>For more information please consult the <i>ERC policy on PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees</i> in the ERC Work Programme 2016, Annex 2.</p>
8.	For medical doctors who hold both a medical doctor degree and a PhD, which degree will be taken into consideration for the calculation of the eligibility window?	For medical doctors who have been awarded both a medical doctor degree and a PhD, the date of the earliest degree that makes the applicant eligible takes precedence in the calculation of the eligibility time-window (2-7 years after the date of award of the PhD or 4-9 years past the medical doctor degree completion for Starters).
9.	If a Principal Investigator only has a Master Degree and no PhD , can he/she have enough experience and publications to apply for an ERC Starting Grant?	<p>For an ERC Starting Grant Call, the Principal Investigator must have been awarded a PhD or equivalent doctoral degree to be eligible. First-professional degrees will not be considered in themselves as PhD-equivalent, even if recipients carry the title "Doctor".</p> <p>For more information please consult the <i>ERC policy on PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees</i> in the ERC Work Programme 2016, Annex 2.</p>

10.	Can a Principal Investigator appear in more than one proposal as a Principal Investigator to the ERC at the same time? Is it possible to receive funding for more than one participation at the same time?	<p>There are three main restrictions to be considered for Principal Investigators in this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Principal Investigator may submit proposals to different ERC frontier research grant calls made under the same Work Programme, but only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated. • A researcher may participate as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator (<i>NB: Projects with Co-Investigator were supported under the Advanced Grant in ERC Work Programmes from 2008 – 2011</i>) in only one ERC frontier research project at any one time (<i>NB: A new frontier research project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous frontier research grant agreement has ended</i>). • A researcher participating as Principal Investigator in an ERC frontier research project may not submit a proposal for another ERC frontier research grant, unless the existing project ends (<i>NB: According to the duration of the project fixed in the previous frontier research grant agreement</i>) no more than two years after the call deadline; <p>These restrictions may be modified in future work programmes by the ERC Scientific Council in light of experience.</p> <p>As a team member, it is possible to participate in more than one ERC grant.</p> <p>Please refer to the ERC Work Programme 2016 (section “Eligibility criteria”) and to the relevant call for more information.</p>
11.	Can/shall the Principal Investigator choose the appropriate ERC peer review evaluation panel for his/her proposal?	<p>For the ERC Starting Grant, the applicant will choose a primary evaluation panel and may also indicate a secondary evaluation panel. He/she should indicate when he/she believes that her/his proposal is of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature.</p> <p>In most cases the proposal will be evaluated by the primary panel indicated by the applicant. However, if the scope of a proposal does not correspond to the expertise of the primary panel, the proposal can be reallocated to another panel, if the panel chairs of the original and the new panel unanimously agree to do so.</p>
12.	Do peer reviewers receive all parts of a proposal?	<p>For the ERC Starting Grant, Step 1 of the peer review evaluation process is based only on the extended synopsis, the Principal Investigator's CV and the track record (Part B1 only). At Step 2, the peer reviewers base their assessment on the Step 1 document (Part B1) and the scientific proposal (Part B2).</p> <p>For more information on the evaluation process, please refer to the ERC Work Programme 2016 (section 'Evaluation procedure and criteria').</p>

13.	Is it possible to choose ERC panels from different domains?	For the ERC Starting Grant, the applicant will choose a primary evaluation panel and may also indicate a secondary evaluation panel. He/she should indicate when he/she believes that his/her proposal is of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature. Further explanations can be found in the Information for applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2016 Calls . The primary panel structure and description is also described in Annex 1 to the ERC Work Programme 2016 .
14.	Should the applicant provide the names and the Curriculum Vitae of the team members in the proposal?	The CVs of individual team members should not be included. Although, it is not mandatory to provide the names of individual team members, the proposal should describe the composition of the team that will carry out the proposed activities.
15.	What are the reporting requirements for an ERC grant?	<p>Article 20 of the H2020 ERC Grant Agreement defines the reporting requirements and foresees two different reporting streams to cover the financial aspects on the one hand and the scientific aspects of the grant on the other hand. This approach distinguishes ERC projects from standard H2020 projects. Scientific reports are the sole responsibility of the Principal Investigator and are submitted via the Host Institution usually only twice during the lifetime of a project (at mid-term and at the end). The financial reports are to be prepared by the Host Institution in consultation with the Principal Investigator and must usually be submitted every 18 months including information on the use of resources and the general implementation of the project (see Article 20.3 of ERC Model Grant Agreement H2020).</p> <p>Only once at the end of a project, the Host Institution will also have to include a Certificate on Financial Statements for each beneficiary (and linked third party) depending on the amount of the costs claimed (if it requests a total contribution of €325.000 or more).</p> <p>Both types of reports (Scientific and Financial) are prepared and submitted online via the Participant Portal.</p>
16.	What is the best practice for communication between the Host Institution, the Principal Investigator and the ERC Executive Agency during the grant preparation and implementation ?	<p>In H2020 all interactions with the ERCEA will take place online via the Participant Portal. The handling of documents will be fully electronic as there is no need anymore to exchange any paper document. The grants will be prepared and then signed electronically. Requests of amendments will be prepared, submitted and, in case accepted or rejected electronically. All Reports will have to be drafted and submitted via the Portal. According to the various phases of the project-life cycle the correct actors (HIs and/or PIs) will be informed via email that certain tasks must be performed in the Portal.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above and in an effort to keep on offering a high level service, the Agency strongly encourages both the Host Institutions and the Principal Investigators to contact the respective Agency staff for discussion in an informal phase about all developments of changes in their respective action. This is of utmost importance in order to avoid cancellation of documents or requests submitted via the Portal which are incomplete or incorrect.</p>

		<p>The name and surname of the ERC officer responsible for the Principal Investigator's grant can be found in the Portal. The officer can be easily contacted via email, the format of which is always: <i>name.surname@ec.europa.eu</i>. In addition, a messaging tool is embedded in the Portal itself and will allow the Principal Investigator to communicate directly with the officer without having to use emails.</p> <p>Furthermore, the ERCEA has set up a helpdesk to provide Principal Investigators with assistance and guidance throughout the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>The helpdesk can be contacted by email at: ERC-C2-PI-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu</p>
17.	<p>What type of feedback will I be receiving for my proposal during and after evaluation?</p>	<p>During each step of the evaluation the two main elements of the proposal (Principal Investigator and research project) will be evaluated and rated. At the end of each evaluation step the proposals will be ranked by the panels on the basis of the marks they have received and on the panels' overall appreciation of each proposal's strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>At the end of Step 1 of the evaluation, on the basis of the assessment of Part B 1 of the proposal, applicants will be informed that their proposal:</p> <p>A. is of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation; B. is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation; or C. is not of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation.</p> <p>At the end of Step 2 of the evaluation, on the basis of the assessment of the full proposal, applicants will be informed that their proposal either:</p> <p>A. fully meets the ERC's excellence criterion and is recommended for funding if sufficient funds are available; or B. meets some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded.</p> <p>More information on the results of the peer review evaluation can be found at section 3.7 of the ERC Rules for Submission and Evaluation.</p> <p>Applicants may also be subject to restrictions on submitting proposals to future ERC calls based on the outcome of the evaluation. Applicants will need to check the restrictions in place for each call (for 2016 calls see restrictions on submission of proposals under '<i>Eligibility criteria</i>' of the ERC Work Programme 2016).</p> <p>In addition, once the evaluation of their proposal has been completed, applicants will receive an evaluation report which will include the ranking range of their proposal out of the proposals evaluated by the panel (for more details, see Information for applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2016</p>

		<p>Calls).</p> <p>More information on the evaluation procedure can also be found in the ERC Work Programme 2016 section relevant to the call.</p>
18	Where can I address questions related to the ERC 2016 Starting Grant call?	<p>Questions related to the ERC 2016 Starting Grant Call can be addressed to the dedicated functional mailbox: ERC-2016-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu</p>