



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION
AND SPORT



REACH HIGH II



30th July to 28th August 2026
Noon – Local time

Regulations 2026

**This Scheme is administered by the Scholarships' Unit
Ministry For Education and Sport**

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Website <https://myscholarship.gov.mt>

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**Co-funded by
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A strong base of Post-Doctoral research programs can help to increase the human capital supply and expertise that can effectively contribute towards Research and Innovation (R&I) investment – thereby, contributing towards the EU Headline Target of increasing R&I investment. Therefore, Post-Doctoral Programmes can help to contribute towards Malta's economic, social, environmental, and cultural development as well as to realize the potential of individuals and to provide new career perspectives.
- 1.2 Post Graduate Research also is linked to the ESF+ programme, as it can lead to the creation of opportunities, and the grant is an investment in human resources and skills. Post-doctoral research education is of central importance as it provides the means through which research activity may be engendered within Universities and Industry. It is also vital that the areas of note that have been selected by the country for future development based on past success are further enabled to provide Malta with needed, additional, development capacity.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 Post-Doctoral Research forms an increasingly important part of any country's economic and social agenda. Through this post graduate research, there will be more investment in human capital with a focus on **emerging labour markets sectors**, including areas of **green, digital, STEM, smart specialization, innovation** and **other sectors addressing the evolving development needs and challenges characterizing Maltese society, in line with Malta's national priorities.**

The key objectives of the Post-Doctoral Grants are:

- Producing well-rounded, professional researchers who contribute to the advancement of their fields of knowledge internationally, using a variety of relevant skills.
- Promoting researcher development that engages in (two-way) knowledge transfer with various external stakeholders, including research organisations, employers, policy- makers, nongovernmental organisations, the media, and

the wider public.

- Strengthening the research competence by building expertise in areas of strategic economic importance for Malta.
- Support will also be provided to address the evolving development needs and challenges characterising Maltese society, in line with Malta's national priorities.
- Increase the number of Post-Doctoral graduates to create a stronger knowledge base to better compete internationally; and
- Contribute towards research in identified areas of national and EU priorities.

This investment is concentrated to further strengthen the building of research communities in Malta with the aim to reap economic benefits derived through the effects of human resource development, R & I, and knowledge diffusion on technological innovation.

The Reach High II Scholars Programme which is co-funded by the ESF+ 2021 – 2027, aims to address the above objectives.

3. Explanatory Notes – Definitions

- 3.1 **Academic Mentor** shall mean the person or persons responsible for supporting and mentoring the Researcher and ensuring the academic quality of the research produced throughout the duration of the awarded research grant.
- 3.2 **Agreement** shall mean a legally binding document to be signed by the Researcher as beneficiary of the Post-doctoral grant and the Project Leader – Scholarships Unit within the Ministry for Education and Sport. These Regulations shall be construed as forming part of the Agreement. The monetary amounts shown in the Agreement shall be disbursed only if the proper documentation is submitted and verified for eligibility and correctness. In the event of any inconsistency or discrepancy between the Agreement and these Regulations, these Regulations shall prevail in all cases and the Agreement shall be amended to the extent of the discrepancy or inconsistency with these Regulations. These Regulations and Agreement will be administered by the Scholarships Unit within

the Ministry for Education and Sport. The research projects is co-funded by the European Union, ESF+ 2021–2027.

- 3.3 **Applicant** shall mean a person that submits a Post–Doctoral research project application.
- 3.4 **Attestation** letter shall mean a document attesting the acceptance of the applicant by the institution where the research project will take place assuring the required conditions for the suitability of the research project. This documentation also needs to specify the duration of the research of not more than 35¹ months and the costs involved.
- 3.5 **Bench Fees** are charges levied by the university, research institute or laboratory for technical expenses directly related to the research programme, such as laboratory consumables. Examples may include research materials, chemicals, testing supplies, equipment usage, usage of software licences and databases. Procurement of hardware and software are not covered as bench fees under the Reach High II project. The list of bench fees including the cost of each item, should be included with the attestation letter.
- 3.6 **Commencement Date** of Post–doctoral research shall mean the date as specified in the attestation letter being the official start date of the study programme/course and is considered as the date on which payments to awardee will be calculated. Research Abroad Allowance will be calculated as per boarding pass/airline confirmation of when awardees travel if they travel after the commencement date.
- 3.7 **ESF+** shall mean European Social Fund Plus.
- 3.8 **Host Institution / Higher Education Institution (HEI)** For the purposes of these Post–doctoral Grants this means a higher, accredited education local or foreign institution that is recognised by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) www.mfhea.mt. This HEI shall be committed (through an Attestation Letter signed by the Rector or delegate with the researcher) to provide support to the researcher. This commitment is a requirement for the interested Applicants.

¹ Without prejudice to Section 5 – financial support and duration.

- 3.9 **Joint Research programme** shall mean when one of the institutions is in Malta and the other is a recognized foreign institution situated abroad.
- 3.10 **MES** shall mean Ministry for Education and Sports.
- 3.11 **MQF (Malta Qualifications Framework)** shall act as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning.
- 3.12 **Post-Doctoral researcher** is a PhD holder who is able to carry out an independent research, teaching activity and ready to be engaged in academic life. A Post-Doctoral researcher is an individual holding a doctoral degree who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training financed through this initiative for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a career path of their choosing. This is also referred to as researcher or as the grant holder.
- 3.13 **Post-Doctoral Grant** shall mean the funding for the research project by the Ministry for Education and Sports.
- 3.14 **Project Leader (PL)** shall mean the person who is entrusted with the overall financial and legal responsibility for the implementation of the **REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme – Post- Doctoral Grants**.
- 3.15 **Pro Rata** shall mean a method of calculating or allocating allowances based on the proportion of time, an individual is entitled to within a full 12-month term. Allowances will be adjusted according to the period of eligibility.
- 3.16 **REACH High II Board** shall mean an expert group entrusted with the selection and evaluation of research projects as well as deciding on technical matters that may arise throughout the funding term, pertaining to specific research projects that have been awarded financing.
- 3.17 **Research Project** shall mean the research work proposed by the Researcher and approved by the Reach High II Board of the Reach High II Post-Doctoral Research Grant Scheme.

- 3.18 **Tripartite Agreement** shall mean an agreement signed between the Project Leader, the Host Institution and researcher stipulating the conditions of the Grant, including amongst others intellectual and property rights; supervision; and reporting. (Refer to Appendix 1)

4. Eligibility

- 4.1 To apply for the Post-Doctoral Research Project, an Applicant shall:
- a) Be a Maltese citizen who has been residing in Malta for the past five (5) years. Provided that a Maltese citizen who has been residing outside Malta for study, health or work purposes or any other purpose which the Reach High II Scholarship Scheme Board may consider, will still be eligible to apply and this period of time, during which the citizen was abroad, will not be taken into consideration for the purpose of calculating the five (5) year requirement; or
 - b) Be a national of an EU/EEA state or a family member of such EU/EEA national (as defined in SL460.17 and in SL217.04 respectively for EU and EEA nationals), provided that such person has obtained permanent residence in Malta in accordance with SL460.17 and in SL217.04 respectively for EU and EEA nationals and has been residing in Malta for the past five years; or
 - c) Be a national of an EU/EEA state who is in Malta exercising his/her Treaty rights as a worker, self-employed person or person retaining such status in accordance with SL460.17 and has been residing in Malta for the past five years or
 - d) Be a third country national who has been living in Malta for the past five years who has been granted long-term residence status under SL217.05.
- 4.1.1 Be applying for Post-Doctoral Research within the identified Priority Areas of Study.
- 4.1.2 Applicants shall start their Post-Doctoral Research Project between 30th July 2026 and 31st December 2026
- 4.1.3 **Applicants who have already undertaken/or are currently undergoing a Post-**

Doctoral research/project are not eligible to apply under this scheme.

4.1.4 Applicants may apply provided that they meet one of the following conditions:

- a) Be in possession of a PhD or equivalent-based doctorate; or
- b) Have successfully defended their doctoral thesis on condition that they shall submit an attestation issued by the competent department of the respective Institution and that they shall have been conferred with the Doctorate title before the commencement date of the post-doctoral research project; or
- c) Are approaching the end of their PhD or equivalent-based doctorate studies and have a set date for the defense of their doctoral thesis, on condition that they shall submit an attestation issued by the competent department of the respective Institution and that they shall have been conferred with the Doctorate title before the commencement date of the post-doctoral research project.

4.2 Applicants must demonstrate the acceptance of the accredited research institution for the duration of the research project or signed agreement between host institutions.

4.3 The Attestation letter as defined in clause 3.4 must have the below details:

- A clear statement signed by the Rector (or delegate) issued by the Recognised Institution that it is unconditionally accepting the applicant to conduct the Post Doctoral Research
- The Commencement Date of the Post Doctoral Research;
- The End date of the Post Doctoral Research (which shall mean when the programme of studies is expected to be completed) or the duration of the course;
- Direct research support expenses, including registration, enrollment, tuition, and training-based fees, should be specified. If the research is lab-based, this must be stated, along with a detailed list of bench fees and their costs. Additionally, any other expenses, such as lab access and usage fees, should be included if any.

- Modality of study a clear statement that the research is conducted on full time basis only.

The Applicant should note that the Agreement to be signed after the award of the Scholarship shall include only the information contained in this attestation letter. SCHOLARSHIPS UNIT- MES shall not accept amendments to the Agreement other than those which reflect the information and/or data clearly stated in the latest the attestation letter submitted by deadline.

For avoidance of doubt, this shall mean that the SCHOLARSHIPS UNIT –MES will refuse to pay any fees introduced after the attestation letter is issued. The SCHOLARSHIPS UNIT – MES and the Reach High II Board shall not include any such or similar additions in the Agreement and SCHOLARSHIPS UNIT – MES shall not pay any such or similar fees.

4.4 The complete Application Form and mandatory documents shall be submitted by **Friday 28th August 2026 at noon (Local Time)**. Other documents issued by the Host Institution shall be submitted **by 30th October 2026 by 4PM (Local Time)**. (Refer to clause 9.2)

4.5 Applicants need to propose a research project under the mentorship and support of a local/foreign University recognised by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA).

It is the responsibility of Applicants, in possession of qualifications awarded by foreign HEIs/Universities, to produce an evaluation report on equivalence and comparability of qualifications issued by the Malta Qualifications Recognition information Centre (MQRIC) within the MFHEA. A copy of the said report issued by the MQRIC, is to be submitted by 30th October 2026.

4.6 Applicants whose qualifications are obtained from a foreign Higher Education Institutions (HEI)/ Universities listed on the website of MQRIC as Approved Institutions (www.mfhea.mt), are not required to produce the evaluation report on comparability of qualifications.

4.7 **An Applicant shall become ineligible if they are in breach of any part of the Regulations.**

4.8 Applicants in possession of other national/EU (or a combination of both) public

grants or national/ EU/ Commonwealth (or a combination) scholarships for the same research project shall be deemed ineligible under the Reach High II Post-doctoral scheme if not notified and approved by the Board/Office. Any scholarships or other supplementary grants awarded to the Post-doctoral awardee shall be notified to and approved by the Reach High II Board/Office, whether such are awarded to the Applicant prior to the Reach High II Post-doctoral scheme or throughout the duration of the research project. In the event that an Applicant is granted a Reach High II Post –Doctoral grant and the Project Leader / MES discovers, after the grant of such Reach High II Post –Doctoral grant, that the Post-doctoral awardee was, at any point in time, whether prior to the award of the Reach High II Post-Doctoral Grant, or after such award, in receipt of any national/EU public grant or national/EU scholarship, the Post-doctoral awardee shall be liable to refund all the amount/s up to then paid to them in full, and this without prejudice to any other legal action which may be taken in their regard.

- 4.9 Proposals which include research subjects that fall outside the limitations of ethics as defined in Regulation 2021 /695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28th April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Article 18 Eligible actions and Ethical Principles) shall not be funded.

5. Financial Support and Duration

- 5.1 The maximum grant awarded for any individual research project shall not exceed €200,000. The maximum project duration shall be thirty-five (35) months. Projects with a duration of less than 35 months may, where duly justified and approved, be granted an extension². However, under no circumstances shall any extension result in a project continuing beyond 30 June 2029,

6. Priority Areas of Study

- 6.1 The research grants are intended to compliment EU priority areas, focusing on emerging labour market sectors, including green, digital and innovation, STEM as well as smart specialisation. Support will also be provided to address the

² Despite the extension, no further funds beyond the €200,000 per project will be disbursed.

evolving development needs and challenges characterising Maltese society, in line with Malta's national priorities.

- 6.2 The University must confirm the subject areas by the second deadline, Friday 30th October 2026 by 4p.m. via email on reach-high.mes@gov.mt.

7. Choice of Institution

- 7.1 Awards are tenable at any local/foreign HEI (including Universities) for a specific research project. Only those institutions recognised by the Maltese authorities — Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) shall be taken into consideration by Reach High II Board

- 7.2 The MQRIC may be contacted as follows:

**Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) /
Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA
J. Abela Scolaro Street, Hamrun HMR1304**

E-mail: info@mfhea.mt Website: www.mfhea.mt

8. Administration of Post-Doctoral Research Projects

- 8.1 The Post-Doctoral Grants Scheme is administered by the REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme – Scholarships Unit – within MES. The Reach High II Board is responsible for appropriately conducting the selection and ranking process of proposals and overseeing the scheme.

- 8.2 All correspondence including any queries regarding the Reach High II Post-Doctoral Grants is to be addressed to:

**REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme – Post-Doctoral Grants
Scholarships Unit
Ministry for Education and Sport (MES) Room 232 Education Building
Great Siege Road,
Floriana VLT 2000
Malta**

Tel. No.: (+356) 2598 2671 /7
E-mail: reach-high.mes@gov.mt

Please note that the official website of the Reach High II Post-Doctoral Research Projects is found on <https://myscholarship.gov.mt/>. The Scholarships Unit does not assume any responsibility for any incorrect information found on other websites as regards the Reach High II Post- Doctoral Grant Scheme.

9. Application Forms

9.1 Applicants are to apply by completing the **on-line application** form accessed via the MES website: <https://myscholarship.gov.mt/>. The REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme – Post-Doctoral Grants Application Regulations may be downloaded from the website: <https://myscholarship.gov.mt/>

9.2 Applicants shall submit their Application Form to be evaluated by the Reach High II Board together with the following:

9.2.1 **To be submitted by Friday 28th August 2026, at noon (Local Time):**

- Residence permit or permanent residence certificate or long-term resident status (mandatory where applicable).
- Applicant's curriculum vitae; (Mandatory)
- Declaration (to fill in and upload Schedule I of the Regulations); (Mandatory)
- Certificates of PhD degree, or attestation issued by the competent department of the respective Institution that they shall have been conferred with the Doctorate title (Mandatory).
- Applicants must also provide a **Justification for the Research Proposal** including links with national and EU priorities and the relevance and impact on Malta; (approx 1,000 words maximum) (Mandatory)
- A **Technical Statement of Proposed Work and Research Plan** (approx. 1,000 words maximum) (Mandatory)
- **Programme of Work** (Gantt chart for work programme); (Mandatory)

- **Two Reference Letters** including contact detail of referees³ (Mandatory)
- **Supporting documents** such as a list of previous publications/papers/papers accepted for publication and URL if applicable, (Mandatory where applicable);
A copy of the Table of Contents and abstract / summary from their Doctoral Thesis (Mandatory)
- **A copy of the Jobs plus employment history.**(Mandatory)

9.2.2 To be submitted by 30th October 2026 at 4.00 p.m. (Local Time):

- A supporting document attesting the applicant's acceptance by the host institution as per clause 4.3, which must be signed solely by the Rector (or delegate) sent directly to the Reach High email. This document should confirm where the research will be carried out, and assuring the required conditions for the suitable development of the research;
- If the research project is laboratory based, applicants will be asked to provide a letter of support from the host institution verified by the Head of finance office of the University mentioned in the application sent directly to the Reach High email confirming the list of bench fees and specifying the cost and that laboratory space and access can be provided ;
- Copy of MQRIC evaluation report/receipt (where applicable)
- The confirmation about the subject areas by the university.

9.3 Late and incomplete applications shall not be considered by MES.

10. Eligibility, Selection Process and Procedure

- 10.1 MES will set up a Reach High II Board to operate the process of selection. This Board shall be responsible for all matters concerning selection according to pre-established criteria identified in Clause 11 and determination of appropriate awards according to the Regulations.

³ The Reach High II Board reserves the right to contact referees once you have submitted the complete application form.

- 10.2 The mode and medium by which the interviews will be conducted will be decided by the Board. During the interview, applicants shall be invited to provide a short presentation⁴ explaining their research proposal as well as answering any queries the board may have with regards to their submission. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to make sure to be available on the date and time communicated to them for the interview (including presentation). No alternative arrangements shall be made to change the date and time of the interview unless there are exceptional circumstances (supported by written proof) that warrant the change of such date and time. These exceptional circumstances shall be examined, and such alternative date and time may be agreed to by the Board, at its discretion.
- 10.3 In the case of applicants who are unable to attend the given date and time for the interview due to being abroad, such interviews may take place online only at the given date and time. Reach High II Board does not assume any responsibility if the interview fails to materialise properly due to any technical reason. In exceptional cases, an alternative date for interview may be given by the Reach High II Board depending on the circumstances which led to the failure of such an interview.
- 10.4 Applicants will be notified of their ranking by the Reach High II Board/Office. Obtaining a pass mark does not automatically mean that a grant is being awarded.
- 10.5 The Ministry for Education and Sport has also set up the Appeals Board to deal with objections raised by Applicants after they are informed in writing with the decisions of the Reach High II Board.
- 10.6 Applicants are to ensure that they apply online by the stipulated deadline. The Reach High II Board and the Scholarships' Appeals Board shall not consider any petitions stating that the Application Form was submitted without tangible proof as evidence.
- 10.7 If an Applicant disagrees with the Reach High II Board only the Applicant may present a petition to the Appeals Board by email, on email address; scholarshipsappeals.MES@gov.mt within six (6) working days from the date

⁴ Presentation must be provided to the Reach High II Office prior to the interview.

when the Reach High II Board communicate their decision to the Applicant in writing. In the petition the Applicant has to clearly state the reasons why they are contesting the decision by the Reach High II Board.

- 10.8 The Appeals Board shall only address appeals from the decisions of the Reach High II Board on matters related to procedure or interpretation of the regulations in terms of eligibility, awards, and other decisions related to the awarding of a grant. Under no circumstance shall the Appeals Board change the Regulations, the score of Applicants deriving from interviews by the Reach High II Board, nor change the ranking of an Applicant as a result of such Score. The decision taken by the Appeals Board is final.

11. Selection Criteria

- 11.1 Applications are considered on the basis of the following selection criteria:
- (a) Academic and Personal merit of the Applicant (20%);
 - (b) How studies are related to the identified priorities in Clause 6 (20%);
 - (c) The relevance of the research to the local and EU Priorities (25%);
 - (d) The likely impact of the work on the development of Malta (20%);
 - (e) Presentation provided by applicant (10%);
 - (f) Number of publications and previous experience in the area of specialisation for this Post- Doctoral Research (5%).
- 11.2 An Applicant is considered to have passed if 70% of the total allocated marks (500 marks) is obtained; nevertheless, this does not automatically mean that a grant is being awarded.
- 11.3 Where necessary, the Reach High II Board may appoint experts in the area concerned to evaluate the application.

12. Value of Awards and Payments

12.1 The research grant shall cover for Post–Doctoral research projects provided by an accredited and recognized University/Host Institution including **Post–Doctoral Research Allowance, Eligible direct research support expenses** and **Research Abroad Allowance** (if applicable), as per below.

12.1.1 Post–Doctoral Research Allowance⁵: Researchers will benefit from €43,696 per annum pro rata. This allowance is to support the researcher to carry out full–time research work.

Awardees shall need to notify beforehand the Reach High II Board/Project Leader of any commitment of employment during the duration of their studies. **Any additional paid work besides the full–time research work needs to be approved by the Reach High II Board/Project Leader. Any additional paid work undertaken alongside the full–time research must be part–time and must not exceed 20 hours per week. The Reach High II board may decide to halt the PDRA if found in breach of this clause.**

12.1.2 Payments may also be suspended should there not be a positive assessment from the academic mentor, or by the person responsible for the follow–up of the researcher’s activity or by the host institution. Failure to receive this information could lead to the non– continuation of the grant.

12.1.3 **Eligible direct research support expenses** such as registration, enrolment fees or tuition fees, training–based fees, etc... which shall not exceed €3,000 per annum. This amount may increase in the case of Lab based research. Such costs cannot exceed €20,000 per annum.

Tuition fees and/or bench fees are to be paid by the Researcher directly to the Recognised Educational Institution. The fees paid shall then be reimbursed on presentation of invoice/s and the original official receipt/s of payment/s or equivalent (i.e., receipted invoice where applicable) issued by the receiving Recognised Educational Institution. Awardees are bound to provide a Bank statement as proof of payments/transaction. Documentation received by email direct from the institution, not through the awardee, is considered as original.

⁵ Post–Doctoral Research grant includes any Social Security and Social Protection Obligations.

The Board reserves the right to ask the applicant for any further evidence and if such further evidence is not forthcoming, the Board may decide not to reimburse if the correct documentation is not presented.

12.1.4 Research abroad allowance including accommodation: In the case of research projects carried out outside Malta, the researcher shall also receive up to €10,000 per annum. This will be based on a case- by-case basis. A copy of rent agreement/s must be provided at agreement stage covering the duration of the research period.

12.1.5 For an Awardee who is doing a Research Project at a Recognised Institution, who during the course of their studies is required to go abroad for research purposes or on their programme of study, will be entitled to two hundred euro (€200) per visit abroad subject to the provision of boarding passes and confirmation from their respective Institution confirming the purpose of their visit, up to a maximum of two thousand and four hundred euro (€2,400) over a 12 month period.

12.1.6 For those whose visit is 30 days or longer the allowance will be calculated pro-rata on four thousand euro (€4,000) per annum subject to the provision of boarding passes and confirmation from their respective Institution confirming the purpose of their visit.

12.1.7 The total of the grant cannot exceed €200,000.

13. General Conditions

13.1 The awarding of the research project becomes factual through the allocation of a grant under the conditions foreseen in these Regulations and in the Agreement to be signed by MES and the research project holder. As part of the signing of Agreement, the Awardee shall be required to fill in a number of forms, including, TR/S-9, and other forms that may be communicated by the Project Leader.

13.2 The Agreement must not be extended later than 30th June 2029, provided that the criteria for awarding are still fulfilled. The research project holder should submit a request for an extension to the Reach High II Scholarships Unit within

MES, together with the supporting documents demonstrating compliance to the following:

- Evaluation report submitted by the supervisor and/or the host institution reporting on the researcher's work and his/her activities which shall be included in the agreement extension request; and
- The evaluation report mentioned above shall include a forecast of the accomplishment of the agreed research work programme by the researcher and the suitability of the extension to the Agreement.

- 13.3 Notwithstanding the granting of any extension, the total financial assistance payable in respect of any individual project shall in no circumstances exceed €200,000. Furthermore, no extension of the project implementation period shall be granted beyond 30 June 2029, which date shall constitute the final and absolute deadline for all purposes under this Scheme.
- 13.4 The Researcher may not change the objectives indicated in the proposed work programme without consent from the Mentor and/or the Host institution. Any change should be communicated to the Scholarships Unit within MES by the researcher, together with the evaluation report of the Mentor's and of the Host institution.
- 13.5 Save for exceptional situations duly substantiated by the stakeholders, any change to the Mentor or Host Institution of the research project is not allowed.
- 13.6 MES reserves the right to publish the results including the names and I.D numbers of the Reach High II Applicants on the website <https://myscholarship.gov.mt/> . When applying for a grant, the Applicants give consent for such publication.
- 13.7 In line with the ESF+ Programme obligations, awardees are expected to remain/return to Malta for a minimum period of 3 years post completion of the Research Project. Such condition will be checked with the relevant Competent Authorities. Upon successful completion of the research, the researcher should submit the Jobsplus employment history and /or Proof of Employment. Up to four years after the successful completion of the research, the Project Leader

may request further information/proof from the awardees. In the case that such obligation is not fulfilled, the Researcher might be requested to refund all or part of the funds already received according to the circumstances of each case.

- 13.8 Expressly excluding any Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) relating to any background intellectual property (“**Background IP**”) used in the implementation of the Research Project (being IP which is not a direct result of the Research Project, and which may pertain to the Host Institution, the Post-Doctoral Researcher or any third parties), the following shall apply:

Any IP, including patents, directly arising from or derived from the Research Project work as funded by the Grant and carried out by the Post-Doctoral Researcher pursuant hereto (“**Foreground IP**”) shall be covered by an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) agreement that acknowledges that the research work carried out, is co-funded by the ESF+ 2021–2027;

The ownership of any intellectual property rights to Foreground IP, including in respect of patents will be equally shared between the Government of Malta (50%) and the Post-Doctoral Researcher (50%).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when relying on Background IP owned by the Host Institution for the purpose of the implementation of the Research Project, the Host Institution shall provide a licence for them to use the required Background IP.

It is the responsibility of the Post-Doctoral Researcher to make sure that all intellectual property rights are safeguarded and that they act in an ethical and legal manner with respect to their, and other persons’ intellectual property rights.

- 13.9 Before applying for the Reach High II Scholars Programme, the researcher must confirm with the University whether it agrees to the terms of the Tripartite Agreement (Annex I). Only then can the University be listed in the application, as a prospective institution for postdoctoral research.

- 13.10 Researchers will be subject to a State Aid assessment on a case-by-case basis.

- 13.11 On award of a Grant, the Project Leader of the Reach High II Project shall make information obtained available to public authorities for accountability purposes.

- 13.12 Researchers who are found to have given false information or who have in any manner withheld information that would have influenced the awarding of the Grant in accordance with these Regulations, shall be immediately disqualified and shall be asked to reimburse any expenses and money granted. The administrators may proceed with a criminal liability suit, without prejudice to any civil action for damages, against such Awardees.

14. Termination before completion

- 14.1 A researcher who does not attain the objective set in the approved work programme or whose research project is cancelled due to serious violations of their duties with the Host Institution might be requested to refund all or part of the funds already received through this grant according to the circumstances of each case.
- 14.2 A negative evaluation of the researcher's performance by the Mentor /Host Institution will be presented to the Reach High II Board for reviewing and this may result in the cancellation of the grant.
- 14.3 Researchers who for any reason discontinue their research project shall inform the Scholarships Unit within MES in writing immediately. The case will be reviewed by the Reach High II Board. The researcher may be required to refund the funds disbursed.
- 14.4 Researchers shall not be deemed to be in breach of these regulations ONLY in case of serious illness and death of the researcher. In case of serious illness, the Researcher needs to provide medical certificates and testimonials to the Reach High II Board. However, the REACH HIGH II Board shall in no way be bound to waiver all claims put forward and reserves the right to appoint its own expert, be it medical or otherwise, to advise and assess the case of the claimant. Thus, researchers who cannot pursue further studies due to serious illness might be required to refund grants on a pro-rata basis as approved by and at the discretion of Reach High II Board, upon evaluation of the situation.

15. Monitoring and Control

- 15.1 Monitoring of research projects is carried out by the Mentor, or by the person responsible for the follow-up of the researcher's activity and by the host institution. Approximately every six (6) months researchers shall ask their academic mentor to submit to the Project leader a report confirming progress, which may include feedback on agreed schedules, milestones, and deliverables and research outputs of the researcher. Failure to receive this information could lead to the non-continuation of the grant. (Refer also to Clause 14.3)
- 15.2 All proposed publications arising from the research work must have the approval of the Academic Mentor prior to publication.
- 15.3 The research project might be subject to monitoring and control actions by national and European bodies according to the applicable legislation – EU No. 2021/1060 and 2021/1057 and subsequent legislation. The funded researchers are under the obligation to provide the requested information which may also be used in evaluation studies.

16. Deliverables

- 16.1 The Mentor shall submit a final report of the researcher's activities to Scholarships Unit within MES. This report shall also contain the URL address of publications and scientific creations resulting from the activity.
- 16.2 **Whenever the objectives of the research project are achieved before the end of the initially set deadline payments shall cease as from the conclusion of the research work.**
- 16.3 The researchers need to write a minimum of three (3) publications in research journals throughout the duration of the research project. These must be sent in electronic format to the Scholarships Unit.
- 16.4 The deliverables of each research activity shall include (among others):
- Relevant publications in international/ local renowned journals, publications in conference proceedings, papers in international conferences, etc...;

- The dissemination of results to public and private bodies and entities;
- Technical reports etc...;
- Patents, ISO, new experimental devices, product standards derived from research results, plans and proposals for the improvement of offered services, innovative suggestions – proposals on resolving problems of production operators, instruments or protocols for monitoring or measuring variables in natural or man-made systems, pilot plants, etc.; (where applicable).

16.5 On completion of the research, a write up on the research work carried out, shall be submitted to MES.

17. Publicity Obligations

- 17.1 All publicity, including public lectures, interviews, email signatures, letterheads, office signs, publications, monographs, print materials, online materials, press releases, television and radio advertisements, websites, film, video, and audio recordings associated with or arising from the research undertaken by the researcher while in receipt of REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme – Post-Doctoral Grants funding must contain acknowledgement of funding received from the grant.
- 17.2 Reach High II Project is co-funded by the ESF+ 2021 – 2027. Since the project is co-funded by the ESF+ 2021 – 2027, all publications and dissemination of results arising from the research project being funded by REACH HIGH II Post-Doctoral Research Projects shall reflect the following acknowledgement: The research work disclosed in this publication is funded by the Reach High II. “The project is co-funded by the ESF+ 2021 – 2027”.
- 17.3 Researchers must disseminate the results of the research widely and clearly acknowledge the European Union’s and National support in all communications or publications, in whatever form or whatever medium, including the Internet, or on activities for which the grant is used.

18. Schedule 1



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA



DECLARATION

To Reach High II Board

I _____ hereby declare that:

- I have read and understood and am abiding with the Reach High II Post-doctoral Grant – 3rd Call 2026 Regulations.
- The information provided on the CV is correct and I am giving consent to the Reach High II Office to conduct the necessary checks.
- All information provided in my application is correct.
- I give my consent to the Scholarships' Unit to verify, process and share with other Government entities any data and information related in this Application Form and subsequent Grant (if applicable) for accountability and verification purposes.

Applicant ID Card Number

Applicant Signature



Co-funded by
the European Union



Annex I

- (a) State Aid Declaration
- (b) Double Funding Declaration
- (c) Template of Tripartite Agreement.

Tripartite Agreement for the Award of a Post-Doctoral Grant
under the *Reach-High II Scholars Programme Scheme*

Ministry for Education and Sport.

1. Parties to this Agreement

This Agreement is entered into on the _____

Between:

- 1. The Government of Malta**, as herein represented by Ms. Silvana Caruana (ID: 246875M) in her capacity as the REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme – Post– Doctoral Scheme Project Leader (the “**Project Leader**” – Scholarships Unit – People Management Department within the Ministry for Education and Sport (“MES”)); and
- 2. The University of** _____ (the “**Host Institution**”) as herein represented by _____ (ID: _____), in their capacity as _____; and
- 3.** _____, holder of Identity Card Number _____ and residing at _____ (the “**Post–Doctoral Researcher**”).

Agreement No: _____

2. Aims and Objectives of Research Project

- 2.1 The aims and objectives of the research project (the “**Research Project**”) for which the Post–Doctoral Researcher is receiving a Post–Doctoral Grant (the “**Grant**”) by virtue of the REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme are those specified in the Technical Statement of Proposed Work and Research Plan and the Programme of Work (Gantt chart for work programme, hereinafter the “**Work Programme**”) submitted with their REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme application on which they were interviewed and annexed with this Agreement as Annex II.
- 2.2 Save in exceptional situations duly substantiated by the Post–Doctoral Researcher and a potential new host institution, any changes to the Host Institution are not allowed.

3. Effective Date and Duration

- 3.1 The Grant is to support the Post-Doctoral Researcher to carry out and perform their duties faithfully and diligently on a full-time basis. The Post-Doctoral Researcher shall notify beforehand the Reach High II Board/Project Leader of any commitment of employment during the duration of their studies. **Any additional paid work undertaken alongside the full-time research must be part-time and must not exceed 20 hours per week. The Reach High II board may decide to halt the PDRA if found in breach of this clause.. Additionally,** should there not be a positive assessment from the academic mentor/supervisor the person responsible for the follow-up of the Post-Doctoral Researcher's activity or by the Host Institution (the "**Academic Mentor/supervisor**"). Failure to receive this information could lead to the non-continuation of the Grant. The duration of the Research Project is up to thirty five (35) months as specified on the Attestation Letter issued by the Host Institution. Projects with a duration of less than 35 months may, where duly justified and approved, be granted an extension¹. However, under no circumstances shall any extension result in a project continuing beyond 30 June 2029.
- 3.2 The implementation period of this Agreement shall come into force on _____ and shall remain in full force and effect until _____ (the "**Term**").
- 3.3 Under exceptional circumstances, the Term may be renewed, up to a maximum total term of thirty five (35) months, but in any case up to no later than 30th June 2029; provided that the awarding criteria are still met at the time of such renewal and Grant funds are available.
- 3.4 In furtherance of the foregoing, the Post-Doctoral Research no extensions are permitted beyond 30th June 2029. In case the research is less than thirty five (35) months, to request an extension by submitting a request to the MES Scholarships Unit, along with supporting documents demonstrating compliance with the following criteria:
- (a) An evaluation report submitted by the Academic Mentor /Supervisor and/or the Host Institution reporting on the researcher's work and their activities, which shall be attached to the agreement extension request; and
 - (b) The evaluation report mentioned above should include an update on the successfully-completed portion of the Work Programme by the Post-Doctoral Researcher, and the research work to be undertaken during the extension period.
- 3.5 The maximum grant awarded for any individual research project shall not exceed €200,000. The maximum project duration shall be thirty-five (35) months. Projects with a duration of less than 35 months may, where duly justified and approved, be granted an extension. However, under no circumstances shall any extension result in a project continuing beyond 30 June 2029.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

4.1 Pertaining to the Post-Doctoral Researcher

- (a) The Post-Doctoral Researcher is being awarded the Grant to carry out a post-doctoral independent focusing on emerging labour markets as part of the Malta' and E.U social agenda and as specified by the Reach High II Regulations 2026.¹
- (b) The Post-Doctoral Researcher may not change the objectives indicated in the Work Programme without consent of the Academic Mentor/Supervisor and/or the Host Institution. Any change should be communicated to the MES Scholarships Unit by the Post-Doctoral Researcher, together with an evaluation report of the Academic Mentor/Supervisor and the Host Institution supporting such change to the Work Programme.
- (c) The Post-Doctoral Researcher, *inter alia*, shall deliver:
 - (i) A minimum of three (3) publications in research journals throughout the duration of their Research Project. A copy of these must be sent in electronic format to the Reach High II Scholarships Unit [on reach-high.mes@gov.mt](mailto:reach-high.mes@gov.mt);
 - (ii) On completion of the Research Project, a write up on the research work carried out, shall be submitted to MES Scholarships Unit;
 - (iii) Relevant publications in international renowned journals, publications in conference proceedings, papers in international conferences, etc.;
 - (iv) The dissemination of results to public and private bodies and entities;
 - (v) Technical reports as applicable;
 - (vi) Patents, ISO (International Organisation for Standardization), new experimental devices, product standards derived from research results, plans and proposals for the improvement of offered services, innovative suggestions – proposals on resolving problems of production operators, instruments or protocols for monitoring or measuring variables in natural or man-made systems, pilot plants, etc. (where applicable);

¹ Reach High II 3rd call Regulations 2026.pdf

- (d) The Post-Doctoral Researcher shall ensure that:
- (i) All proposed publications arising from the research work must have the approval of the Academic Mentor/Supervisor prior to publication;
 - (ii) All publications and dissemination of results arising from the Research Project shall reflect the following acknowledgement: *'The research work disclosed in this publication is funded by the REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme. The project is co-funded by the European Union under ESF+ 2021-2027'*.
- (e) The Post-Doctoral Researcher shall disseminate the results of the Research Project widely and clearly acknowledge the European Union and national support in all communications or publications, in whatever form or whatever medium, including the Internet, as well as during activities for which the Grant is used.

4.2 Pertaining to the Host Institution

- (a) For the purpose of the Grant, the Host Institution is committed to provide the required continuous support to the Post-Doctoral Researcher as the beneficiary of the Grant.
- (b) The Host Institution is declaring that the Research Project will be carried out as full-time research work.
- (c) *Inter alia*, the Post-Doctoral Researcher is to avail themselves fully from the support of _____
[Higher Education Institution signatory to this agreement]
- (d) The Parties acknowledge that the Host Institution is responsible for the Academic Mentor/Supervisor. The Host Institution shall appoint an Academic Mentor/Supervisor who shall be responsible for supporting and mentoring the Post-Doctoral Researcher and ensuring that academic quality of the research produced throughout the duration of the awarded Grant. Save to exceptional situations duly substantiated by the Post-Doctoral Researcher and the Host Institution, any change to the Academic Mentor/Supervisor is not allowed.
- (e) MES acknowledges that the Host Institution has procedures whereby progress by the Post-Doctoral Researcher can be reviewed. Payments may be suspended should there not be a positive progress report from the Academic Mentor/Supervisor responsible person at the Host Institution in accordance with section 5.1 here below. The Parties agree that:

- (i) Failure to provide such information could lead to the non-continuation of the Grant; and
 - (ii) In the event of a negative evaluation of the Post-Doctoral Researcher's performance by the Academic Mentor/Supervisor responsible person as aforesaid will be presented to Reach High II Board for review, and this may result in the non-continuation of the Grant;
- (f) It is imperative that in the case of Research Project expenses such as registration, enrolment fees, tuition fees, training-based fees and lab fees paid by the Post-Doctoral Researcher, the Host Institution shall provide them with the original invoice and the original official receipt of payment or equivalent (i.e. receipted invoice where applicable).

5. Monitoring and Control

- 5.1 Monitoring of the Research Project is to be carried out by the Academic Mentor/Supervisor, or by the person responsible for the follow-up of the Post-Doctoral Researcher's activity at the Host Institution.
- 5.2 Approximately every six (6) months during the period of applicability of this Agreement, the Post-Doctoral Researcher shall request their Academic Mentor/Supervisor or such responsible person to submit to the Project Leader a report confirming progress on the Research Project, including feedback on agreed schedules, milestones and deliverables and research outputs of the Post-Doctoral Researcher.
- 5.3 The Research Project may be subject to monitoring and control actions by national and European bodies according to the applicable legislation – EU Regulations 2021/1060 and 2021/1057, as amended, updated or replaced from time to time. The Post-Doctoral Researcher shall be obliged to provide the information requested for such purpose, which information may also be used in evaluation studies.
- 5.4 In accordance with section 13.9 of the Reach High II Regulations, the Post-Doctoral Researcher shall be subject to a State Aid assessment, which shall be carried out on a case-by-case basis. The Post-Doctoral Researcher and the Host Institution must comply with any findings or conditions of this assessment. A declaration confirming this obligation is attached as Annex I hereof and forms part of this Agreement.

6. End and Cancellation of the Research Programme

- 6.1 The Academic Mentor/Supervisor shall submit a final report of the Post- Doctoral Researcher's activities to the MES Scholarships Unit. The report shall also contain the URL address of publications and scientific creations resulting from the activity.
- 6.2 Whenever the objectives of the Research Project are achieved before the end of the initially set deadline, payment of the Grant shall cease as from the conclusion of the Research Project work.
- 6.3 If the Post-Doctoral Researcher does not attain the objective set in the approved Work Programme or if their Research Project is cancelled by the Host Institution due to a serious violation of their duties at the Host Institution, MES may request the Post-Doctoral Researcher to refund the whole or part of the Grant already disbursed to them, as the Reach High II Board shall determine on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.4 Non-continuation of the Grant under section 4.2(e)(ii) hereabove shall result in the cancellation of the Grant.
- 6.5 If the Post-Doctoral Researcher, for any reason, discontinues their Research Project, they shall inform the MES Scholarships Unit in writing immediately. In such event, MES may request the Post-Doctoral Researcher to refund the whole or part of the Grant already disbursed to them, as the Reach High II Board Unit shall determine on a case-by-case basis.

7. Intellectual Property

- 7.1 Expressly excluding any Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) relating to any background intellectual property ("Background IP") used in the implementation of the Research Project (being IP which is not a direct result of the Research Project, and which may pertain to the Host Institution, the Post-Doctoral Researcher or any third parties), the following shall apply:
 - (a) Any IP, including patents, directly arising from or derived from the Research Project work as funded by the Grant and carried out by the Post-Doctoral Researcher pursuant hereto ("Foreground IP") shall be covered by an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) agreement that acknowledges that the research work carried out, is co-funded by the ESF+ 2021-2027;
 - (b) The ownership of any intellectual property rights to Foreground IP, including in respect of patents will be equally shared between the Government of Malta (50%) and the Post-Doctoral Researcher (50%).

- 7.2 Notwithstanding the foregoing, when relying on Background IP owned by the Host Institution for the purpose of the implementation of the Research Project, the Host Institution shall provide a license for them to use the required Background IP.
- 7.3 It is the responsibility of the Post-Doctoral Researcher to make sure that all intellectual property rights are safeguarded and that they act in an ethical and legal manner with respect to their, and other persons' intellectual property rights.

8. General Provisions

- 8.1 This Agreement, inclusive of its annexes constitutes the entire Agreement between the three named Parties in relation to the subject matter hereof.
- 8.2 Any amendment to this Agreement shall not be valid unless it is made in writing and signed by the Parties or their duly-authorised legal representatives.
- 8.3 If any provisions (or part of a provision) included in this Agreement is found to be illegal, void or unenforceable, in whole or in part, then such provision shall be severed from the rest of this Agreement and the remainder of the Agreement shall continue to have full force and effect for all intents and purposes of law.
- 8.4 The headings of the provisions of this Agreement are for reference purposes only and shall not affect the terms of this Agreement.
- 8.5 This Agreement is construed under, and governed by, the Laws of Malta and any disputes arising as a direct result of this Agreement shall be referred to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of Malta.

--- END ---

IN WITNESS WHEREOF this Agreement has been executed by each Party on the date written at the head of this document.

SIGNED by the Post-Doctoral Researcher -

Name in full: _____

Signature: _____

(To be signed by the Post-Doctoral Researcher or by the Post- Doctoral Researcher's Representative in possession of a Power of Attorney)

ID Card No. _____

SIGNED by Ms. Silvana Caruana in her capacity as Project Leader – REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme on behalf of the Government of Malta -

Signature: _____

ID Card No. 246875M _____

SIGNED, on behalf of the Host Institution:

Host Institution Name: _____

Signatory Name and Position: _____

Signature: _____

ID Card No. _____

SIGNED by Irene Bezzina as witness in her capacity as Project Administrator – REACH HIGH II Scholars Programme

Signature: _____

ID Card No. 5482 G _____

SIGNED by MES Legal Advisor, also as witness –

Name in full: _____

Signature: _____

ID Card No. _____