

Rules of Procedure for the Vocational Training Fund of the Association of Academics

These rules were approved on 13 January 2015.

1.0 About the Fund, Member Societies, Fund Members' Rights, etc.

1.1 About the Fund.

The activities of the Fund are based on a charter for the Vocational Training Fund of the Association of Academics (BHM) from 11 February 2013.

1.2 Member Societies. Members from the following member societies of BHM can receive grants from the Fund: the Association of Icelandic Architects, the Icelandic Veterinary Association, the Society of Broadcast Journalists, the Icelandic Society of Radiographers, the Association of University Teachers, the Association of University Teachers in Akureyri, the Academic Union of Ministerial Staff, the Icelandic Social Science Association, the Icelandic Actors Association, the Icelandic Association of Professional Dancers, the Union of Natural Scientists in Iceland, the Icelandic Association of Directors, the Icelandic Association of Biomedical Scientists, the State University Professors' Union, the Reykjavik University Academics, the Icelandic Association of Social Workers, the Union of University Graduates, the Icelandic Occupational Therapy Association, the Union of Economists, the Association of Actors at the National Theatre of Iceland, the Icelandic Midwives' Association, the Association of Icelandic Priests, the Icelandic Union of Library- and Information Scientists, the Union of Food and Nutrition Scientists, the Union of Lawyers, the Icelandic Psychological Association, the Icelandic Physiotherapy Association, the Association of Social Educators.

1.3 Seniority. Fund Members must have been members of the Fund for at least six continuous months in order to become eligible for allocation, based on the date of the start of the project.

1.4 Maternity/Paternity Leave. Fund Members enjoy full rights during maternity/paternity leave under Act No. 95/2000 on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave, provided that union dues are covered by payments from the Maternity/Paternity Leave Fund to the relevant union.

1.5 Priority. If the Fund dries up or the Fund is at a disadvantage in terms of income and expected obligations in the opinion of the Fund's Board, those Members who have never previously received an allocation from the Fund shall have priority above others. If there is still a need for prioritization, the Fund's Board may give more academic projects priority over others.

2.0 Processing of applications. The Fund's staff process applications in compliance with these Rules of Procedure and in accordance with the Fund's Board's decisions. The Fund's Board shall resolve issues, for example regarding membership or funding eligibility for applications and shall deal with other matters which may arise. It shall ordinarily meet nine times a year, in January, March, April, May, June, August, September, October and November.

3.0 Obligations of the Employer.

Only individuals may apply for grants, provided that they are Fund Members. The Fund's Board may decrease grant amounts if others take part in the cost of the project. If the Board believes that an application to the Fund should be funded by another entity, it reserves the right to notify the applicant, while engaging in no other action.

4.0 Applicants.

Those Fund Members who are employed half-time or more by an employer who is required to pay premium, and who meets the conditions of items 1.2 through 1.4., may apply for a grant from the Fund for projects referred to in item 5.0, provided that at least two years have passed since the applicant last received the maximum allocation from the Fund, cf. item 8.1.

5.0 Eligible Projects.

5.1 Project Subject Matter. Projects must generally relate to either the Fund Member's work or occupational field in order to qualify for funding. Courses intended to increase overall competence in the fields of computer technology, language and communication are still eligible even if the courses may not be directly related to the applicant's occupation or university education. The same applies to projects that do not fall within the applicant's occupational field if the applicant can demonstrate that it will nevertheless be useful in his work in the public sector. Purely leisure courses are not eligible for grants. The Fund's Board shall assess ambiguous cases.

5.2 Project Location and Duration.

It is possible to apply for a grant for domestic and foreign projects, such as courses, conferences, forums and organized professional visits or excursions. The program of an organized professional visit or excursion abroad must be spread over at least two days and the educational program must consist of a total of 8 hours minimum of education. The educational program of an organized professional visit or excursion in Iceland must consist of a total of 6 hours minimum.

5.3 What Is Funded.

Fund Members are eligible for a grant for: course costs, conference fees, telephone expenses with regard to distance education (maximum ISK 10,000 per semester), hotel and accommodation expenses and travel expenses. Funding is granted for air fare with regard to travelling abroad and fixed grants are allocated for expenses from travelling in Iceland. If the distance from the legal domicile to the place of learning or international airport is more than 100 kilometers, a payment of ISK 15,000 is made. If this distance is more than 250 kilometers a payment of ISK 30,000 is made.

5.4 What Is Not Funded.

Fund Members do not receive funding for: subsistence (food expenses), travel within cities and municipalities, wage loss or the cost of procurement of educational materials.

5.5 Grant Amount.

The maximum grant is ISK 100,000 for a two-year period, counting from the first disbursement. Grants are never allocated in excess of the amounts on presented invoices.

6.0 Applications, Their Completion and Dispatch.

6.1 Applications.

Applications shall be submitted electronically to the Fund through the portal My pages with BHM.

6.2 Deadlines.

Applications must be submitted to the Fund before the first of the month during which the Board convenes (January, March, April, May, June, August, September, October and November). Otherwise, Members are not entitled to have their applications processed at the respective month's meeting.

6.3 Completion of Applications.

Fund Members shall carefully complete their applications and specify precisely how they intend to use the grant as well as fill out information on other factors that are inquired about on the form. Otherwise, applicants risk experiencing a delay in the processing of their applications until the required information has been supplied.

6.4 Dispatch.

After an application has been considered, the decision is announced by e-mail. In the same missive, the documents which need to be presented in order to have the grant disbursed are listed.

7.0 Disbursements from the Fund.

7.1 Payment Confirmation. Payments from the Fund are ordinarily made upon presentation of an invoice which has been verifiably paid. If the invoice is lost, the Fund's Board assesses whether and under what conditions the grant will be paid out. The Fund's Board reserves the right to request original copies of invoice should it deem it necessary to do so.

7.2 Confirmation of the Project.

If a grant is sought for an organized professional visit or excursion, the applicant must provide confirmation of attendance in addition to the presentation of an invoice. The confirmation shall be in the form of a signed letter from a superior or the supervisor of the excursion. The letter shall contain a description of the excursion and an explanation of its purpose. Also enclosed shall be a list of participants along with a detailed program describing the professional part of the excursion and specifying the places visited, what material is presented at each location and the relevant times.

Applicants must report absences to the Fund.

7.3 Deadline for Receipt of Payment Documents.

In order for a grant to be disbursed from the Fund, all documentation must be submitted no later than the 20th of each month. The Fund Member is responsible for submitting the required documentation to the Fund.

7.4 Grant Disbursement.

Grants are disbursed from the Fund at least once a month. Grants from the Fund are generally paid out on the 25th of each month or on the next business day after that date if it occurs on a holiday. Prerequisites for payment are that the Fund's Board has approved the application and that confirmation of payment has been received. In the case of a grant for an organized professional visit or an excursion, confirmation in accordance with Article 7.2 must be presented to the Fund prior to grant disbursement.

7.5 Notification of Grant Disbursement.

Once a grant has been paid out to a Fund Member, a notification is sent to him via e-mail.

7.6 Information to Tax Authorities.

At the beginning of each year, information is sent to the tax authorities wherein beneficiaries and grant amounts from the previous year are listed. The Fund Member is responsible for preserving the original invoice for the expense for which a grant has been obtained to present to the tax authorities if requested.

7.7 Reserved Flexibility.

The Fund reserves the right to flexibility in the disbursement of the grant. Efforts will be made to disburse grants from the Fund as soon as circumstances permit in each case.

8.0 Time Between Grant Disbursements, Part-time Jobs, Lapse, etc.

8.1 Time Between Grant Disbursements.

The maximum grant is ISK 100,000 every 24 month period, cf. item 5.5.

8.2 Part-Time Work.

A Fund Member who works less than half-time may only receive half a grant from the BHM Vocational Training Fund.

8.3 Retroactive Applications.

It is possible to apply for a grant for a project as old as one year based on the date of the end of the project. An application must therefore be received at the Fund's office no later than one year after the date of the end of the project.

8.4 Lapse of Right to Grant Disbursement.

The right to payment in accordance with the Fund's decision lapses if the applicant has not submitted the necessary documentation (invoices and confirmation) within 9 months from the date of notification of the grant.

8.5 Double Payment or Overpayment of Grant.

If a mistake occurs in the handling of a grant application or payment of a grant, the Fund's staff will endeavor to correct the error as soon as possible. If a Fund Member has received double payment or excess payment of a grant, he is obligated to notify the Fund of the mistake and reimburse the Fund immediately for the overpaid amount.

9.0. Right to Cancel Application.

A Fund Member who has been approved for a grant is not obligated to complete the project for which the grant was offered. If the applicant does not accept the grant offer or cancels his application before disbursement, the application has no effect on his rights in the Fund.

10. Interruption or Discontinuity of Fund Membership.

10.1 Unpaid leave. A Fund Member on unpaid leave is entitled to funding in accordance with the rules of the Fund during the first 6 months, provided other conditions are met.

10.2 Unemployment. Former Fund Members who are unemployed can apply for and receive a grant from the Fund in accordance with the following rules:

a. Conditions.

The applicant must have been a Member of the Fund for at least six months when he becomes unemployed, cf. item 1.3, no more than 12 months may have passed since he lost his job and he must have paid union dues for unemployment benefits. Unions may lengthen this period up to a total of 3 years, if they are responsible for paying a 0.22% unemployment premium for unemployment benefits to the Fund from the start date of the period of unemployment.

b. Eligibility.

If funding is sought for retraining or continuing education in accordance with what is considered to be eligible for funding for other Fund Members or is sought for a course which is directly related to the unemployment of Fund Members.

c. Application Procedure.

With regard to the form and processing of applications from unemployed people, the same rules of procedure that apply to other Fund Members and grant disbursements to them usually apply.

10.3 Illness. Fund Members retain their rights in the Fund for the period during which they receive sickness allowance from the BHM sickness fund or the BHM support fund. The affairs of Fund Members who receive rehabilitation allowance from the Social Insurance Administration are processed in the same way as those of the unemployed, cf. item 10.2.

10.4 Severance Agreements and Compensation upon Employment Termination.

Fund Membership is considered to end when the employment relationship ends. An agreement between parties of an employment contract relating to compensation

upon termination, including how it should be determined and paid, does not have an effect on the Fund's Board assessment of when an employment relationship is considered to be over.

10.5 Other Discontinuity of Membership.

The Fund's Board will decide on a case-by-case basis whether and how to assess previous Fund membership in order to bridge the discontinuity of membership. Discontinuity of membership may, however, never exceed 6 months.

11.0 Right to Appeal.

If a Fund Member is dissatisfied with the Fund's decision regarding a grant application and supporting documents, he shall always have the right to refer the case to the Fund's Board again for review. The case will then be addressed at the next Board meeting.

12.0 Entry into Force.

These rules are agreed by the Fund's Board on 13 January 2015 and shall enter into force upon publication on the BHM homepage. Upon entry into force, previous rules of procedure and other decisions which are not in accordance with these rules shall cease to apply. If the Fund's Board makes any alterations to these rules, they will be presented in an appropriate forum and updated on the Fund's website.

Reykjavík, 13 January 2015

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