

Starter and Incentive Grants

The starter and incentive grants were announced in the Higher Education and Science [Administrative Agreement](#) of 14 July 2022. Who are these instruments intended for, what can they be used for and how is Leiden University going to apply them?

Objective

These instruments are intended to provide greater stability and predictability in research funding. The grants are non-competitive (direct government funding) and should reduce pressure of work, competition and funding application pressure, and promote curiosity-driven research. They fit well with the ambitions in our strategic plan 'Innovating and Connecting', and can contribute to promoting team science, interdisciplinarity, the intertwining of teaching and research, impact and inclusiveness.

Target groups

The starter grants are intended for researchers who receive a permanent appointment as a university lecturer (in and after 2022) and who have a minimum appointment of 0.7 FTE, of which at least 0.2 FTE relates to teaching. This also applies to researchers with a comparable position within university medical centres. The grant may only be applied once in a person's career.

Incentive grants are intended for current university lecturers, senior lecturers and professors with permanent appointments. The principle is that the incentive grants will be applied where the pressure of work is greatest and the opportunity for curiosity-driven research is lowest. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Association of Dutch Universities (UNL) will appoint a working group for incentive grants. This working group will advise on the further criteria for the instrument. This advice is expected in the first quarter of 2023.

NWO will appoint an administrative committee that will examine how the new starter and incentive grants relate to existing research funding. The committee will advise on the question of whether the awarding of a starter or incentive grant will result in – possibly temporary – submission restrictions to NWO. NWO will await the advice from the committee and until then will not impose measures specifically aimed at recipients of starter and incentive grants. This means that, for the time being, no submission restriction will apply to them for open/ongoing calls from NWO's integral call planning, as it is neither possible nor desirable to retroactively change the conditions for submitting proposals.



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Expenditure

The money from the grants can be used for direct costs (e.g. salary costs of a PhD student, data manager, use of laboratories, purchase of instruments, etc.) and indirect research costs.

Amounts

The starter grants are structural funds and the incentive grants will run at least until 2030. OCW will distribute the funds among universities and UMCs based on student numbers. This means that Leiden University (incl. LUMC) will receive €14.3m in starter grants and €14.4m (until 2030) in incentive grants annually. The maximum amount of individual subsidies is €300,000.

Allocation of resources

Unfortunately, the resources are not sufficient to serve the entire target group. This applies not only to our university but to all institutions. The Executive Board has decided to allocate the resources over the faculties (incl. LUMC) based on student numbers. The faculties have been asked to draw up a faculty framework per instrument to allocate the funding, taking into account the frameworks in the administrative agreement and the objectives of the strategic plan. The faculties are currently working on this allocation. The Executive Board will decide on the allocation of the funds to the faculties at the end of November.