

## 2025 Guide for Applicants

For further information please see the webpage:

[Marie Speyer Excellence Grants - University of Luxembourg | Uni.lu](https://www.uni.lu/mse/grants)

And/or contact contact the MSE team at:  
[mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu](mailto:mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu)



## Table of Contents

1. Marie Speyer Excellence Grants Scheme.....	2
Eligibility for participation .....	2
Requirements for project application .....	2
2. Specificities of the MSE projects .....	3
Duration and grant budget.....	3
Eligible costs .....	3
Ethics, Open Science, gender, and doctoral education.....	4
3. Practical application to the MSE call .....	5
Project proposal writing and formatting.....	5
Project proposal submission.....	5
Application process .....	5
Application form.....	6
Budget template (see the Excel budget table) .....	7
Budget categories: .....	8
4. Selection process of MSE projects.....	10
Oversight Committee.....	10
Selection principles .....	10
5. Project duration extension request.....	11
6. Budget change request.....	11
7. Interim and final reports .....	11

## 1. Marie Speyer Excellence Grants Scheme

The Marie Speyer Grants are open to all disciplines and sectors. The scheme is organised by the Gender Equality Office with the collaboration of the Vice-Rector for Research following strict criteria of research excellence.

These grants aim to enhance existing research endeavours or facilitate the inception of innovative research concepts. In the year 2025, up to **four** scholars can be awarded a grant in the amount of **130.000 Euro grant** (total budget).

### 2025 Timeline

- Call for applications: from **1 December 2024 until 3 February 2025** at 14h (CET)
  - ePAS approval and institutional validation submission by 27 January 2025
- Evaluation of proposals: from 4 February until 19 May
  - Evaluation Meeting: Week 12-16 May (indicative date)
- Communication of results: 31 May, 2025 (indicative date)
- Project start dates:
  - Earliest start date: 15 June 2025
  - Latest start date: 1 December 2025

### Eligibility for participation

- Applicants must be researchers with a valid contract at the University of Luxembourg (Uni.lu). The call targets:
  - Postdoctoral fellows.
  - Research Scientists.
  - Assistant professors, and associate professors (full professors excluded).
- Applicants are women.
- Scholars from any discipline are encouraged to apply.

### Requirements for project application

The **applicant** for an MSE grant:

- complies with eligibility requirements (see above “Eligibility for participation”).
- submits an application following the call guidelines and templates

The **successful candidate** for an MSE grant:

- is the only contact point with the dedicated service at the Vice-Rectorate for Research, the Gender Equality Office (GEO), and administrative departments of Uni.lu.
- is responsible for using the grant, following standards of ethical principles and research integrity.
- acknowledges the financial support from the excellence funding scheme for all publications and/or reports generated with the use of the funding: *“Author X acknowledges financial support of the University of Luxembourg through a Marie Speyer Excellence Grant 2025”*.
- valorises research results, coming from their scientific work generated from the

excellence grant, e.g., if applicable, by declaring it to the central Office of Partnership, Knowledge and Technology Transfer (PaKTT Office).

- prepares a mid-term and a final report that consist in a list all research activities performed, and research outputs produced with the use of the grant (templates will be provided).
- communicates the outputs of the grant (research results) to different audiences, by liaising with the communications department.

## 2. Specificities of the MSE projects

### Duration and grant budget

A MSE project has a duration of up to **3 years**. In conformity with the university law, if a MSE project budget covers the funding for a doctoral fellow, the project duration must be at least 3 years and a maximum of 4 years. In this case only, the project can be extended to **4 years**, **but the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the doctoral fellow must be covered with own funding**.

In 2025 the scheme will award up to 4 grants in the amount of **130,000€**. An argued adaptation of project duration and cost-neutral budget shifts between budget lines during the project is possible. In such cases, the PI must contact the MSE team as soon as possible and at the latest 3 months before the initial project's end date.

If the project budget exceeds 130,000 €, the difference must be covered by the applicant's own budget.

### Eligible costs

The funding of an MSE project is 130 000 € and can be annually distributed in an ad hoc manner over a maximum of 3 years. Where possible, the MSE call provides funding to recruit non-permanent staff, namely doctoral and post-doctoral fellows, or technical staff for the duration of the project.

The requested project costs must be essential for the project implementation and are detailed in the Project Budget Form (Excel table).

The below table provides an overview of eligible costs (not an exhaustive list), while detailed information relevant to the budget establishment is covered in the “Budget categories” section.

#	MSE costs	Eligibility	Applicability
A	Personnel costs	YES	Doctoral and post-doctoral fellows, trainees, professional or technical staff.
B	Third party collaborator, experts	YES	Invited experts, expert speakers' fees.
C	Equipment	YES	Including equipment costs, computer, databases, platform costs and licenses.
D	Travel costs	YES	Consult the Uni.lu financial guidelines*.
E	Documentation	YES	Books, journals, subscription to electronic journals or data bases.

F	Other costs	YES	Catering, logistics, room rental. Open Access publications, patents filing costs. Advertising, conference, organisation and registration, publications.
G	Operating expenses	YES	Operational expenses, supplies, consumables, subcontracting (if no other Uni.lu component can do the activity).

\*see Intranet: [ULI](#) > [The University](#) > [SFC](#) > [Policies and Procedures](#)

## Ethics, Open Science, gender, and doctoral education

### Code of conduct, ethics and personal data

Uni.lu promotes the responsible conduct of research as described in the **University of Luxembourg - Code of Conduct**, and it respects fundamental ethical principles as listed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Any research involving the participation of human subjects, animals, or the use of biological materials or personal data, or which may represent a risk for the environment or society, is considered to have an ethical component. Ethical components must be specifically addressed in the proposal, by fulfilling the **ethics principles** in force at Uni.lu and in the Luxembourgish law. The following panels and contact points might be of relevance:

- The PI must consult the **Ethics Review Panel** of the University of Luxembourg ([ERP webpage](#)) regarding the general ethical aspects of their projects before beginning their research. The Ethics Review Panel may not intervene after the start of a research project phase that raises ethical questions. The ERP may not approve a research project on an ad hoc basis. If the project takes place in a clinical context in Luxembourg and/or involves patients, additional approval may be required from the **Comité National d'Éthique de Recherche** (CNER) and/or the **Commission Nationale de la Protection des Données** (CNPD [Commission nationale pour la protection des données - Luxembourg \(public.lu\)](#)).
- In case the proposal involves animals, the **Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee** of the University of Luxembourg ([AEEC webpage](#)) shall be consulted. This committee examines and delivers an opinion on projects that use animals for scientific purposes.
- For projects handling personal data, the **Data Protection Officer** at Uni.lu ([DPO](#)) provides advice and guidance on data protection to university staff and is the contact person for the National Commission for Data Protection (CNPD).

### Open Science and DORA

Uni.lu encourages the dissemination of research results towards the scientific community and the greater public, as well as their protection and economic exploitation, along the general principle “as open as possible - as closed as necessary”. To maximize the impact of research outputs on science and society, PIs are encouraged to disseminate broadly the project results through high quality, scholarly publications with immediate access to the final peer-reviewed contents. Article processing charges (APC) for full Open Access publications or similar fees are eligible for funding within the project budget.

In the spirit of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), Uni.lu also recognizes the value of other research outputs and encourages notably MSE candidates to deposit research data according to the FAIR principles on field-specific or generic repositories.

In the same line, reviewers evaluating applications to the MSE calls are expected to acknowledge all types of research outputs, independent of journal-based metrics.

## **Doctoral education**

Doctoral fellows of a MSE project are registered in one of the doctoral programmes of the University of Luxembourg. Further information on doctoral education at Uni.lu can be found under “Doctoral education” ([Doctoral Education \(uni.lu\)](#)) and “Office of doctoral studies – BED” ([Office of doctoral studies \(uni.lu\)](#)).

## **3. Practical application to the MSE call**

### **Project proposal writing and formatting**

- Proposals must be written in English. Refer to the application templates for further instructions.
- Please use Arial, font 11, single space and 1.5 cm top/bottom/left/right margins to fill in the application form.
- Each project for the MSE call must be submitted and approved in the online submission tool (ePAS, <https://research.uni.lux>).
- No modification after the deadline will be accepted. Incomplete proposals and those received after the deadline will not be processed. Major budgetary errors may result in the rejection of the proposal. Do not hesitate to contact the MSE team in case of doubt.

### **Project proposal submission**

The final project proposal must include:

- Application form
- Letter of motivation
- Budget file (note that the budget form is for internal purposes and will not be shared with reviewers)
- If the applicant currently holds a postdoctoral or research scientist position, the project proposal must include a support letter from a line manager at Uni.lu, committing to host the project in their unit.

### **Application process**

The application process consists of **4 main steps**.

**Step 1:** Fill in the application form.

- Download the application form and the budget template (see [Useful documents](#) on the MSE webpage)
- Standardize the file name: “2025-MSE\_ProjectACRONYM\_PI LastName\_PI FirstName”.
- In the application form, fill in the requested information. All sections must be completed.
- Please complete the provided budget template.

**Step 2:** Institutional validation (mandatory for all proposals)

- At least one week before the call deadline, you must fill out the institutional validation form ([Useful documents](#)) and send it together with your project proposal (including the budget

file) for institutional validation by the MSE team. The files need to be submitted by email to: [mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu](mailto:mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu) (for SnT researchers the institutional validation is performed by the Project coordinators)

- The MSE team will check for completeness and conformity with eligibility requirements (budget, etc.). Please note, that the team will not comment on the scientific content of the project.
- Without institutional validation, the final application will be rejected.
- Once you have received the feedback from the MSE team, you can make necessary corrections, if any.

**Step 3:** Complete the general project information via the online submission platform (ePAS) using the “Marie Speyer Excellence (MSE)” program (Uni.lu internal).

**Step 4:** Send your complete project proposal (application form, budget file, letter of motivation and a support letter (if applicable)) to the MSE team using the email address: [mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu](mailto:mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu) for final submission.

## Application form

Proposals must be written in English with a fixed number of pages as detailed in the sections below. Font Arial, size 11, single line spacing, and 1.5 cm top/bottom/left/right margins must be used throughout the entire document. Proposals that do not follow these instructions will be rejected.

### a. General project information

- Project ACRONYM, project title, starting date, duration (in months), budget (130k€), recruitment (e.g.: doctoral, postdoctoral fellows, technical staff on non-permanent contract).

### b. Project description

#### Abstract (max. 0.5 page)

- Describe the main idea of your project.
- The abstract should be concise, clear, informative, and self-contained.

#### State-of-the-art including your own relevant previous work (max. 1 page)

- Describe the current scientific state of the art and on-going developments in fields relevant to your proposal, including your own previous work.
- Include available theories, concepts, or solutions, as well as conclusions (possibly with references to literature).
- Provide an assessment of research needs (the main conclusions leading to the proposal).

#### Project description and objectives (max. 2 pages)

- Describe how the scholarship will help research in the corresponding field.
- If applicable, describe the potential use of the results after the fellowship.
- Outline your project's contribution to the research needs.

- Clearly define the goal, objectives, focus and scope of the project in a realistic and as far as possible, measurable form.
- State the main research questions and/or hypothesis to be addressed.

**Project plan (max 2 pages: 1 page of text on first page and a Gantt chart on a second page)**

The project plan is illustrated by a Gantt chart (format of your choice), it describes the work planned in work packages including, if applicable, the progression of the doctoral fellow(s), provides brief argumentation on how the work packages articulate and the structure of the main steps and tasks involved to achieve the project results.

The project plan must include a description and short justification for the requested costs, the detailed budget is an internal document that will not be shared with the evaluators.

**Project outcomes and follow-ups (max. 0.5 page)**

- **Contribution to advancement of knowledge and Uni.lu's research community.** Describe the project's contribution to knowledge production and how the results are exploited and disseminated within the research community. That is, how the project outcomes contribute to (1) the promotion of research across Uni.lu, (2) advancement of the state of the art, (3) the development of the scientific community, and the Uni.lu and its entities in terms of capacities, competencies, visibility, and attractiveness.
- If applicable, describe how the research project will contribute to knowledge generation and the future of society. Describe what efforts (publications and other activities) are foreseen to increase public awareness, well-being, and understanding of the research field.
- **Future research plans.** Indicate how the results of the project can form the basis for future research and what the plans are (depending on the results) for future grant applications to Uni.lu-external funding institutions.
- **Exploitation and dissemination of research results.** Please explain the measures that will ensure exploitation after the end of the project.

**References (max. 0.5 page)**

**Legal and ethical requirements (max. 0.5 page)**

Describe all potential issues regarding data protection, intellectual property rights and ethical issues for the whole project (not only for activities carried out in Luxembourg). Explain how you will address these, e.g., anonymous data processing, consent forms, contracts with companies involved and specify any already existing permission and/or authorisation for the proposed work. Please consult the University of Luxembourg's Policy on Ethics in Research and international codes of conduct.

**Curriculum vitae of the PI (max 5 pages)**

Please follow the provided template of CV at the end of the application form.

**c. Support letter for postdoctoral fellows and research scientists.**

If the applicant currently holds a postdoctoral or research scientist position, the application form must include a support letter from a line manager at Uni.lu, committing to host the project in their unit.

**Budget template (see the Excel budget table)**

This template helps you to get familiar with the required information.

- All amounts are to be entered in euros (€) without cents.

- For all expenses, the procedures, and limits in force at the time the expenses occur will apply. Please consult the latest financial guidelines in the Intranet.
- Major budget errors may lead to rejection of the proposal.

### Budget categories:

#### Category A1: Uni.lu staff involved, paid by Uni.lu (from internal budget).

- List and enter the personnel category for the PI and any other contributors from Uni.lu staff.
- Enter the period of involvement and the number of hours per week in the project of each contributor. Most contributors will probably be involved for the whole duration of the project.

#### Category A2: MSE participants to be financed by the project.

- List all participants who are to be financed through the project.
- Salaries of permanent staff of the university are not eligible and should be listed in category A1.
- PhD fellows can be funded through MSE projects. They should be involved full-time and work towards their doctoral degree. They must be registered in a doctoral programme at Uni.lu. Their PhD thesis must be a project output.
- The following categories of personnel can be financed by the project under Category A2 (use the current grid *coûts salarial*):
  - o Postdoctoral researcher
  - o Doctoral researcher
  - o Research & development specialist
  - o Technical staff on project - (Lab technician or Research support technician)
  - o Student assistants (auxiliary staff on a limited contract) may be included within the budget limits. In exceptional cases, several student assistants will be allowed, e.g., if needed for large-scale interviewing. etc.
- Note that the amounts in the tables are the total costs (incl. university charges) of each position for the university. They are NOT the gross (brut) salaries.
- **The personnel cost table applies to all researchers to be employed at the Uni.lu when the project starts.** When a person is already employed on a fixed-term contract and moves to a new project, please verify that the total duration of the continuous employment of the researcher does not exceed 60 months (Labour law). Renewal/contract prolongation can only be done twice. In case of a potential gap between two contracts, a waiting period (“délai de carence”) must be observed. Please contact your HR partner for details as these regulations are part of the national labour law.
- Participants may have a full-time or part-time contract. Working contracts cannot exceed the approved project duration and the salary costs will have to be calculated accordingly. Many projects start later than anticipated and extension of the duration beyond the initially projected end date is possible. However, as salaries increase over time the extension might involve additional salary costs. These additional costs will not be covered by the MSE grants and other sources will have to be found.
- Anyone who already has a contract with the Uni.lu as adjunct teaching staff member (Vacataire) cannot be financed through the project at the same time (Category A2).

**Category B: Third party collaborators, experts.**

- Remunerated third party collaborators providing services to the project (invited speakers, experts, and operational support) are eligible.

**Category C: Durable equipment.**

- For full time researcher(s) paid by the project (Category A2), the project budget can include some IT equipment. If the project requires a higher performance computer or further equipment, please briefly justify. Additional costs (such as consumables) must be specified in the project budget under Category G.

**Category D: Travel in Luxembourg and journeys abroad.**

- Each trip on behalf of the University must be undertaken most cost-effectively.
- For eligible costs and applicable rates, consult the Uni.lu financial guidelines.

**Category E: Documentation.**

- Documentation such as books or subscriptions to journals.

**Category F: Other costs.**

- Costs for open access publishing, article processing charges (APC) for full Open Access publications or similar fees.
- Costs for translating and editing, patent filing, workshops, seminars, and conferences (including registration or organisation costs, room rental, catering) or advertising.

**Category G: Operating expenses.**

- Specify expenses related to operating costs, consumables, supplies and all the expenses not included in the other categories.
- Subcontracting work must be specified (who, what, how long) and justified, notably, why the work cannot be performed with other groups in the university.

**Category R: Additional income to cover project costs.**

- This category refers to income (in kind or in Euros) from internal or external partners and is used to cover some of the costs listed in Categories A-G.
- **The approved budget will be the sum of the costs of Categories A-G minus this part of the additional income.**
- Provide a short description of the source of the income, i.e., the external partner, as well as country. The following categories are used:
  - o R1: Additional income - from internal sources (directly from faculty, IC, department, other IAS instruments, etc.)
  - o R2: Additional income - from external sources (other state contributions (ministries, FNR, etc), European institutions, other int. organisations, foundations, other third parties (e.g., companies, banks, private persons))

## 4. Selection process of MSE projects

### Oversight Committee

The Oversight Committee of the Marie Speyer Excellent Grants verifies and guarantees that all procedures are performed in an open and transparent manner. The Oversight Committee ranks the proposals based on experts' reviews and recommends the proposal for funding to the Rector.

The Committee is composed by:

- Vice-Rector for Research, Prof. Simone NICLOU
- Gender Equality Delegate, Prof. Skerdilajda ZANAJ
- Strategic Advisor to the Rector, Dr. Philippe DELFOSSE

### Selection principles

The selection criteria are academic excellence, originality and research impact of the application submitted.

In the case of project proposals of equal quality and originality, priority will be given to those where the applicants are working in fields where gender equality is skewed.

The evaluation and selection process consists of several steps:

1. An administrative eligibility check will be performed by the MSE team.
2. Eligible proposals will be sent to a review panel composed of at least 2 evaluators. For each proposal, the submitted project proposal will be shared with 2 evaluators, after confirming that there is no conflict of interest. Keep in mind that to choose evaluators the MSE team will take the keywords you provide in consideration.
3. The Oversight Committee of the scheme ranks the proposals on the basis of the reviews provided by the evaluators and recommends the proposal for funding to the Rector.
4. The decision of the Rector is communicated to the applicants by the Vice-Rector for Research.

Each of the criteria will be evaluated on a 5-point rating scale for the written document:

<b>Score 5</b>	The project proposal is original, exceptionally strong and the use of the grant will generate <b>forefront knowledge</b> . <b>The research produced</b> will likely have an <b>important and substantial impact</b> on science and research.
<b>Score 4</b>	The project proposal is quite original and expected to support research that will make a <b>significant contribution to science and research</b> .
<b>Score 3</b>	The project proposal contributes to research that is <b>competitive at the national level</b> and will probably make a <b>valuable contribution</b> in the international field.
<b>Score 2</b>	The project proposal is solid and is in principle worthy of support. It is considered <b>of less priority</b> than work in the above categories.

<b>Score 1</b>	The project proposal is weak, and it is associated with work that is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in the scientific and or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc. <b>not worthy of funding.</b>
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**The selection criteria are:**

- Academic excellence of the candidate (5 points)
  - The phase of the applicant's career, including diverse career paths, as well as possible breaks and the effects of major life events or pandemic restrictions, will be considered.
- Originality of the project proposal (5 points)
  - According to the aim of this scheme how the project proposal will enhance existing research endeavours or facilitate the inception of innovative research concepts.
- Research impact (5 points)
  - The potential impact of the project proposal also including the impact of the project on the applicant's future research endeavors (for example, funding applications).

## **5. Project duration extension request**

An extension of the project is allowed up to a maximum of 12 months from the initial end date of the project, as it was validated by the Oversight Committee.

To request such an extension, please send an email to [mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu](mailto:mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu) **no later than 3 months prior to the initial project end date.**

A written confirmation (by email) from the financial controller of the remaining budget of the project is also required. If the authorized budget is exceeded, the extension will not be validated.

## **6. Budget change request**

Any request for a budget update must be submitted to the MSE team. To request a budget change, please send detailed information to [mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu](mailto:mariespeyer.grants@uni.lu), as well as a written confirmation (email) from the financial controller that the additional budget is available and can be transferred to the project.

The request will be validated after the Oversight Committee approves the change.

## **7. Interim and final reports**

Two project reports, interim at mid-project and final, up to 3 months after the end of the project, will be requested. An automatic message will be sent from the ePAS platform with the requested date.