



Prof. Dr hab. Zbigniew Błocki
Director of the
National Science Centre
DBR.070.6.2019

Kraków, 24 May 2019

Directors of host institutions conducting NCN-
funded research projects

Dear Sirs and Mesdames!

In response to changes introduced in the new model of PhD-level education by the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018, which came into force on 1 October 2018, and in order to supplement the information conveyed to the directors of host institutions that conduct NCN-funded research projects¹ by the Chair of the NCN Council, the purpose of this letter is to clarify the interpretation of specific provisions that govern the awarding and payment of NCN scholarships to researchers carrying out research projects funded by the NCN.

In research projects funded by the NCN within the framework of calls announced before 14 March 2019, scholarships could be planned out and paid on the basis of:

- *Regulations for awarding scholarships to young researchers in research projects and awarding scholarships for young researchers under the ETIUDA doctoral scholarships funded by the National Science Centre* (passed by the NCN Council Resolution No 50/2013 of 3 June 2013), hereinafter referred to as "Regulations 1";
- *Regulations for awarding scholarships in the NCN-funded research projects* (passed by the NCN Council Resolution No 96/2016 of 27 October 2016), hereinafter referred to as "Regulations 2"; and
- *Regulations for awarding NCN scholarships in the NCN-funded research projects* (passed by the NCN Council Resolution No 85/2018 of 26 September 2018), hereinafter referred to as "Regulations 3".

In what follows, we set out to explain the NCN interpretation of provisions concerning the payment of scholarships awarded pursuant to these Regulations:

1. The National Science Centre shall not question the funding of doctoral scholarships for the purposes within the meaning of Article 209 of the Act on Higher Education and Science from the funds awarded for NCN scholarships.

Funds slated for NCN scholarships can only be paid out if the conditions mentioned in the above Regulations are met, in which case the funds will be disbursed pursuant to the funding agreement. However, the NCN is not in the position to decide whether the payment of an NCN scholarship to a post-graduate student who carries out a research project may cancel the obligation to award him/her a doctoral scholarship pursuant to the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018. Such decision depends on the relations between a doctoral school and post-graduate student and should be taken by the director of the doctoral school or by the head of the host institution that receives NCN funding for the research project that includes such

¹https://www.ncn.gov.pl/sites/default/files/pliki/2019_03_22_stanowisko_rady_zasady_finansowania_stypendiow_i_wynagrodzen_studentow_i_doktorantow.pdf



scholarships. There is no doubt, however, that any such decision must not infringe on the rights of the post-graduate student.

If the heads of the relevant institutions or doctoral schools rule that there are sufficient grounds to consider the NCN scholarship as a doctoral scholarship within the meaning of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018, the NCN shall not question their decision, provided that the scholarships are awarded and paid pursuant to Regulations 1, Regulations 2 or Regulations 3.

The above interpretation also applies if the research project that includes the research scholarship is awarded to a host institution that does not run a doctoral school, as long as the payment of the scholarship does not infringe on the rights of post-graduate students or contradict the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018, and provided that the regulations of the doctoral school allow for such an arrangement. This means that if the research project is conducted at a host institution that does not run a doctoral school and is carried out by a post-graduate student from a doctoral school run by another entity, the National Science Centre shall not question the reimbursement of the doctoral scholarship to the entity that runs the doctoral school from the resources designated for the NCN scholarship within the project.

A similar interpretation applies to research projects funded under calls announced from 15 March 2019 onward.

2. The National Science Centre does not see any legal grounds to prohibit the payment of NCN research scholarships to post-graduate students studying at doctoral schools in any call under which NCN scholarships could be planned out in accordance with the above-mentioned Regulations.

Individuals indicated in item I (2) (c) of Regulations 1, in Article 3 (4) (c) of Regulations 2, and in Article 3 (4) (c) of Regulations 3 are defined as "participants in a doctoral programme" within the meaning of the Act on Higher Education of 27 July 2005 and "participants in a doctoral school" within the meaning of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018, provided all other conditions mentioned in the above regulations are met.

The NCN believes that the proposed solutions will facilitate the recruitment of post-graduate students of doctoral schools for NCN-funded projects and the new regulations will ensure the necessary flexibility in the management of scholarship resources.

Should you have any doubts or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the staff of the National Science Centre.

Zbigniew Błocki
Director of the National Science Centre