

UNIVERZITA PAVLA JOZEFA ŠAFÁRIKA V KOŠICIACH



Guarantor: Rector's Office

Košice, 21 July 2026

Ref.: REK001550/2026-UPA/4889

Rector's Decision No. 11/2026, issuing the Statute of the Internal Scientific Grant System of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice

In accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Institutions Act, as amended, and in accordance with the provisions of Article 4(3) of the Rules of Organization of UPJŠ in Košice, as amended, I hereby

issue

this Decision, issuing the Statute of the Internal Scientific Grant System of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice.

Article 1

Mission of the Internal Scientific Grant System of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice

1. The mission of the Internal Scientific Grant System of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (hereinafter "VVGS") is to support and stimulate university teachers and researchers (hereinafter the "creative staff") and doctoral students of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (hereinafter "UPJŠ" or the "University"), working in various disciplines of research and education, to create conditions for linking research topics in order to more successfully apply for projects from the external environment (e.g. APVV, Horizon Europe and other national and international programmes), to enable more efficient use of advanced infrastructure and modern educational tools, and to create a competitive and stimulating environment for the creative staff and doctoral students of UPJŠ.
2. In relation to the creative staff and full-time doctoral students who have not reached the age of 35 by the date of commencement of the project, the mission of VVGS is to lead them to independent preparation, creation and implementation of their own research projects in order to learn the principles of grant competition, research team management, and project administration.
3. VVGS supports new, original and interdisciplinary projects.

Article 2

Definition of Terms

1. For the purpose of this Statute, the following terms shall have the following meaning:
 - a) **indexed output of creative activity** means an output of scientific or research creative activity that is recorded in an internationally recognized citation database, in particular Web of Science, Scopus, or ERIH+, and meets the criteria for a scientific publication;
 - b) **output of creative activity in Q1 to Q4 journal** means a scientific publication that is indexed in the Web of Science or Scopus database in a journal ranked in the first (Q1) to fourth (Q4) quartile according to the relevant subject-area ranking (e.g. Journal Citation Reports or SCImago Journal Rank);
 - c) **applicant** means a person authorized to submit an application for project financial support under this Statute. If a project is submitted by a research team, the applicant is the principal investigator;
 - d) **principal investigator** means the person who submits the application for financial support and is responsible for the implementation of the project, achievement of its objectives, use of funds, and submission of the final report;
 - e) **investigator** means a member of the research team who participates in the implementation of the project;
 - f) **research team** means a group of persons consisting of the principal investigator and the investigators;
 - g) **same workplace** means a workplace at the level of a department, institute, or another organizational unit with a comparable status;
 - h) **project topic** means the substantive, professional, or research focus of the project, defined primarily by its objective, research question, methodology used, expected outputs, and description of the problem being addressed;
 - i) **conflict of interest** means, in particular, a family relationship with a member of the research team, the same workplace (department), close scientific collaboration on other projects during the previous five years, or the existence of joint publication outputs.

Article 3

VVGS Grant Schemes

1. VVGS provides support in four grant schemes:
 - a) The “Research Projects for University Teachers and Researchers Under 35 and Full-Time Doctoral Students” programme (hereinafter “VUaVP35”).
 - b) The “Targeted Research Projects” (hereinafter “PCOV”) programmes, intended for all creative staff. PCOV projects are divided into: Pilot PCOV projects (hereinafter “P-PCOV”), Stimulus PCOV projects (hereinafter “S-PCOV”) and Excellent PCOV projects (hereinafter “E-PCOV”).
 - c) The “SAS-UPJŠ ERC Visiting Fellowship Grants” programme, intended for all creative staff.
 - d) The “Projects to Support Integration of Researchers into Research” (hereinafter “PPZVV”) programme, intended for all creative staff after returning from maternity or parental leave.

Article 4

Research Projects for University Teachers and Researchers Under 35 and Doctoral Students

1. The “Research Projects for University Teachers and Researchers Under 35 and Doctoral Students” programme is intended for individuals or research teams consisting of creative staff or full-time doctoral students who, in accordance with the current Statute of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (hereinafter the “Statute of UPJŠ in Košice”), members of the UPJŠ academic community and who have not reached the age of 35 by the date of commencement of the project.
2. UPJŠ generally issues a call for VUaVP35 project proposals once every 12 months, subject to the University’s financial resources. The timetable for VUaVP35 projects (including the project submission deadline, project start date, etc.) is specified in the issued call.
3. The total amount of funds allocated to the call is determined by the Rector of UPJŠ in accordance with the approved UPJŠ budget.
4. The duration of a VUaVP35 project is 12 or 24 months, with financial support of up to EUR 1,500 per year of project implementation.
5. A condition for the successful completion of VUaVP35 project is at least one accepted publication output in the form of an original peer-reviewed scientific publication. Only outputs that acknowledge the VVGS grant scheme as the source of funding and identify UPJŠ as the investigator’s institutional affiliation will be taken into account.

Article 5

Targeted Research Projects

1. The “Targeted Research Projects (PCOV)” programme is intended for research teams consisting of members of the academic community of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, in accordance with the Statute of UPJŠ in Košice.
2. Research teams consist of university teachers, researchers, or full-time doctoral students. The composition of a PCOV research team should ensure a high level of scientific quality, creativity, and an innovative approach to addressing the research task. The research team must include at least one employee who is a supervisor within a doctoral study, at least one full-time doctoral student, and at least one early-stage researcher who has not reached the age of 35 by the date of commencement of the project, all of whom actively participate in the project implementation. The principal investigator must have experience in managing (as principal investigator or deputy principal investigator) at least one project obtained from external sources, excluding S-PCOV projects).
3. Targeted research projects must have a clearly defined project output specified in the application. This may include, in particular, a peer-reviewed scientific publication, prototype, innovative approach, follow-up research project, legal analysis, recommendation for public policy development, artistic work, manual, or methodological guidelines for an external partner.
4. Targeted research projects are submitted and evaluated in two areas:
 - a) social sciences and humanities;
 - b) other sciences.
5. A Pilot PCOV project is intended to support the development of a new research topic that the research team is beginning to develop.
- 5.1. Conditions for submitting a Pilot PCOV project:

- a) the research team must collectively demonstrate experience with the implementation of at least three projects obtained from external sources;
 - b) the professional competence of the research team must be demonstrated by at least five indexed outputs of creative activity in the social sciences or 10 peer-reviewed outputs of creative activity in Q1 - Q4 in other sciences;
 - c) neither the principal investigator nor the co-investigator may previously have participated in the implementation of a P-PCOV project on the same research topic.
- 5.2. The required output of Pilot PCOV project is the submission of a new research project funded from external sources. The principal investigator demonstrates fulfilment of this requirement in the final report by providing evidence that an application for a project funded from external sources has been submitted.
6. Stimulus PCOV project is intended to support the development of a research topic for which the research team has submitted at least two grant applications from external sources without allocation of funds.
- 6.1. Conditions for submitting a Stimulus PCOV project are:
- a) members of the research team have submitted at least two grant applications from external sources in the relevant research topic that were not financially supported due to insufficient funds; fulfilment of this condition must be demonstrated, in particular, by a notification from the provider, evaluation report, or another similar document;
 - b) the professional competence of the principal investigator must be demonstrated by at least one indexed output of creative activity in the social sciences and humanities, or two outputs of creative activity in Q1 to Q3 journals in other sciences within the last five years.
- 6.2. Outputs of Stimulus PCOV project are:
- a) publication of at least two peer-reviewed outputs of creative activity, whereby only outputs that acknowledge the VVGS grant scheme as the source of funding and list UPJŠ as the investigator's institutional affiliation will be taken into account;
 - b) submission of a project funded from external sources.
7. Excellent PCOV project is intended to support the development of a research topic of the highest quality and international relevance, demonstrating potential for an exceptional scientific, social, or economic impact.
- 7.1. Conditions for submitting Excellent PCOV project are:
- a) successful completion of at least three projects funded from external sources, in which the principal investigator was an investigator, and which are related to the research topic of the proposed project;
 - b) the professional competence of the principal investigator must be demonstrated by at least three indexed outputs of creative activity in the social sciences and humanities, or five peer-reviewed outputs of creative activity in Q1 or Q2 journals in other sciences within the last five years.
- 7.2. Outputs of Excellent PCOV project are:
- a) submission of a new research project funded from external sources;
 - b) publication of at least one indexed and two peer-reviewed outputs of creative activity in social sciences and humanities or at least one peer-reviewed output and one indexed output of creative activity in Q1 or Q2 journals in other sciences, or submission of one patent application. Only outputs that acknowledge the VVGS grant scheme as the source of funding and list UPJŠ as the investigator's institutional affiliation will be taken into account.
8. UPJŠ generally issues a call for PCOV projects once every 12 months, subject to the University's financial resources. The timetable for PCOV projects, in particular the project submission deadline, project start date, are specified in the issued call.

9. The period of a PCOV project is 24 months, with maximum financial support of EUR 6,000 for P-PCOV and S-PCOV projects and EUR 12,000 for E-PCOV projects. The total amount of funds allocated to the call is determined by the Rector of UPJŠ in accordance with the approved UPJŠ budget. Of the total amount allocated to PCOV projects, at least 25% are allocated to P-PCOV projects, 25% to S-PCOV projects, and 50% to E-PCOV projects.

Article 6

SAS-UPJŠ ERC Visiting Fellowship Grants

1. The “SAS-UPJŠ ERC Visiting Fellowship Grants” programme is implemented at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (UPJŠ) in cooperation with the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV), based on an initiative of the European Research Council (ERC). The conditions for its implementation are announced by UPJŠ, in cooperation with SAV, on its website. The programme is intended for individuals or research teams whose aim is to strengthen their research profile and improve the preparation of their own future ERC project in an internationally competitive environment before submitting an application for an ERC grant.
2. The objective of the SAS-UPJŠ ERC Visiting Fellowship Grants programme is to support and strengthen the participation of researchers from Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice in ERC calls, and to provide them with the opportunity to gain, through collaboration with ERC project investigators and their teams, the experience and skills necessary for the high-quality preparation and management of projects.
3. The grant is awarded by UPJŠ for a period of 1–3 months, in an amount of up to EUR 12,000 (up to EUR 4,000 per month). It is intended to cover travel expenses, including local transportation costs, accommodation, and subsistence allowance for applicants who are UPJŠ employees.
4. The SAS-UPJŠ ERC Visiting Fellowship Grants programme is open to researchers from all scientific disciplines. The applicant must meet the following conditions:
 - a) must be an employee of UPJŠ or one of its units;
 - b) must demonstrate research quality and outputs at a level corresponding to ERC requirements;
 - c) must submit a fellowship plan, including an outline of the future ERC project proposal;
 - d) must submit an invitation letter from the investigator of an ERC project,
 - e) if awarded the grant, the applicant undertakes to submit an application for an ERC project under one of the ERC calls no later than two years after completing the fellowship, with the project to be hosted at UPJŠ,
 - f) if the applicant fails to submit an application for an ERC project within two years after completing the fellowship, they are obliged to repay the financial support in full.
5. The evaluation process is open and transparent. Each proposal is evaluated by two independent and internationally recognized external evaluators. The main evaluation criterion is research excellence and the applicant's potential to obtain an ERC grant.
6. The selection of applicants from UPJŠ is carried out by the UPJŠ VVGS Committee on the basis of the evaluations. The final decision on the awarding of grants is made by the Rector of UPJŠ.
7. Grant proposals must be submitted electronically in English using the prescribed form, and a printed and signed copy must be delivered to the Life-Long Learning Centre and Project Support of UPJŠ (hereinafter “CCVaPP UPJŠ”), or to the registry office of the UPJŠ Rectorate, within two working days of the electronic submission.

Article 7

Projects to Support the Integration of Researchers into Research

1. The “Projects to Support the Integration of Researchers into Research” (PPZVV) programme is intended for all UPJŠ creative staff returning from maternity or parental leave. It enables a smooth return to the work process and continuation of scientific and research activities.
2. An application for financial support under PPZVV programme may be submitted within the application deadlines specified in Article 11, but no later than nine months from the date on which the applicant returns to work after maternity or parental leave, provided that the maternity leave, parental leave, or consecutive periods of such leave lasted at least 18 months in total. The period of a PPZVV project is 24 months, and the maximum amount of financial support that may be requested by an applicant for one project is EUR 3,000.
3. An applicant for project support may be a university teacher or researcher who, in accordance with the Statute of UPJŠ in Košice, was a member of the employee section of the UPJŠ academic community before taking maternity or parental leave and remains a member of the employee section of the UPJŠ academic community after returning from maternity or parental leave.
4. The applicant for project support may be an individual or a team led by a researcher returning from maternity or parental leave. The project proposal must ensure focused, excellent research in a particular scientific discipline or across several scientific disciplines.
5. The total amount of financial resources allocated to the call is determined by the Rector of UPJŠ in accordance with the approved UPJŠ budget.
6. The required output of a PPZVV project is at least one original peer-reviewed scientific publication. Only outputs that acknowledge the VVGS grant scheme as the source of funding and identify UPJŠ as the investigator’s institutional affiliation will be taken into account.

Article 8

Principal Investigator and Investigator of VVGS Projects

1. The research team consists of the principal investigator and the individual team members - investigators. In accordance with the Statute of UPJŠ in Košice, an applicant for project support under any of the programmes covered by this Statute may only be a member of the UPJŠ academic community. In justified cases, a member of the academic community of another university or scientific institution may also be a member of the research team if the applicant demonstrates that the area of scientific research covered by the proposed project cannot be provided by a member of the UPJŠ academic community. Such a research team member may not receive or use project funds, but may be a co-author of the project outputs.
2. An applicant for project support under the “Research Projects for University Teachers and Researchers up to 35 Years of Age and Doctoral Students” programme may be a university teacher, researcher, or full-time doctoral student who, in accordance with the Statute of UPJŠ in Košice, is a member of the UPJŠ academic community and who has not reached the age of 35 by the date of commencement of the project. The application may be submitted in their own name or on behalf of a research team, none of whose members has reached the age of 35 by the date of commencement of the project. If the principal investigator is a full-time doctoral student, the scheduled completion date of their doctoral studies must extend beyond the project implementation period.

3. A person may be a member of only one research team across all schemes within a single call.
4. An applicant for project support may submit a project with a given research team under one grant scheme only. The same investigators may not be members of the research team for VUaVP35, PCOV, and PPZVV projects submitted within the same application deadline. Within the current call, multiple project applications with an identical substantive focus (topic) may not be submitted in order to prevent duplicate funding. Submitting the same topic multiple times to different grant programmes will result in all such applications being excluded from the expert evaluation process.
5. A project investigator must devote at least one-third of their defined research capacity to the implementation of a VUaVP35 project, taking into account their research capacity committed to other projects, such as VEGA, APVV, etc. The defined maximum annual research capacity is 1,000 hours for a university teacher, 2,000 hours for a researcher, 1,500 hours for a doctoral student before the dissertation examination, and 2,000 hours for a doctoral student after passing the dissertation examination. This research capacity is an administrative figure for VVGS purposes; in the case of a doctoral student, it is not considered working time.
6. The principal investigator must devote at least one-half of their defined research capacity to the implementation of a VUaVP35 or PPZVV project, taking into account their research capacity committed to other projects, such as VEGA, APVV, etc.
7. The principal investigator is responsible for achieving the project objectives, ensuring the appropriate and effective use of funds, and submitting the final report on the implementation of the VVGS project within the specified deadline.
8. The principal investigator may submit only one application under a published call (VUaVP35 or PPZVV) for financial support.

Article 9

UPJŠ VVGS Committee

1. The evaluation of projects, selection of projects proposed for funding, the proposed amount of financial support to be allocated, as well as any matters related to the implementation of UPJŠ VVGS projects are carried out by the UPJŠ VVGS Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee"). The Committee submits the list of projects proposed for funding, together with the proposed amounts of financial support, to the Rector of UPJŠ for approval.
2. Members of the Committee are appointed and dismissed by the Rector of UPJŠ. In accordance with the Statute of UPJŠ in Košice; only a member of the UPJŠ academic community may be a member of the Committee. The term of office of the Committee members is four years. The Committee consists of no more than 7 members with voting rights, the Vice-Rector(s) responsible for the research and development agenda and the doctoral studies agenda, and an honorary member. The honorary member is appointed by the Rector of UPJŠ from among former Committee members upon the proposal of the chairperson of the Committee. Membership in the Committee is non-transferable.
3. The Committee elects a chairperson from among its members with voting rights. The election of the chairperson requires the consent of at least two-thirds of the members with voting rights.
4. The Rector of UPJŠ appoints a new Committee member if an existing member, for serious reasons (e.g. termination of employment, a long-term stay at another institution, or other

reasons), is unable to participate in the work of the Committee or resigns from the Committee membership.

5. The non-voting members of the Committee are the Vice-Rector(s) and the honorary member.
6. The Secretary of the Committee is appointed and dismissed by the Rector of UPJŠ upon the proposal of the Vice-Rector of UPJŠ responsible for the VVGS agenda. The Secretary manages and is responsible for the VVGS project agenda and the administrative operation of the Committee.

Article 10

Meetings of the UPJŠ VVGS Committee

1. Meetings of the Committee are convened and chaired by its chairperson.
2. Meetings of the Committee are held in closed session and may take place either in person or remotely.
3. The Committee has a quorum if at least two-thirds of its members with voting rights are present.
4. Adoption of a Committee resolution requires the consent of an absolute majority of all Committee members with voting rights.
5. The Committee's decision is final within the Committee's evaluation process, and no remedy may be brought against it. This is without prejudice to the Rector's authority to decide on the approval of financial support.
6. The details of the Committee's proceedings are governed by the Rules of Procedure of the UPJŠ VVGS Committee.

Article 11

Submission and Processing of VVGS Project Applications

1. The project principal investigator submits an application for financial support for all types of projects under the programmes set out herein electronically via the CCVaPP UPJŠ portal available on the CCVaPP UPJŠ website (<http://portal.ccvapp.upjs.sk/grantcalls>). The deadlines established for the electronic submission of applications for the individual programmes covered by this Statute are:
 - a) for VUaVP35 projects – 1 April or a date specified in the call issued by the Rector of UPJŠ,
 - b) for PCOV projects – 1 October or a date specified in the call issued by the Rector of UPJŠ,
 - c) for PPZVV projects – 1 April and 1 October or a date specified in the call issued by the Rector of UPJŠ,
 - d) for SAS-UPJŠ ERC Visiting Fellowship Grants projects - the deadline is specified in the call issued by the Rector of UPJŠ.
2. For the purpose of determining whether an application was submitted within the prescribed deadline, the date of electronic submission is decisive. If this Statute or the call also require a hard-copy version of the application, the date on which it is delivered to the registry office of the UPJŠ Rectorate is also decisive. An application may not be submitted in any other manner than that stipulated by this Statute or the call.
3. After an application for project financial support has been submitted, the Department of Project Support of CCVaPP UPJŠ carries out a formal check to verify the completeness

of the required information and compliance with all specified conditions of the relevant project scheme. If formal deficiencies (e.g. a missing signature, incorrectly stated workplace/department of an investigator, missing capacity, etc.) are identified during the check, the principal investigator will be asked to remedy the deficiencies within five working days.

4. To successfully submit an application for any type of project, it is essential to meet all the conditions set out in the relevant articles of this Statute and in the conditions of the call. Applications for project financial support that do not meet the requirements of the call or this Statute, as well as applications for which the principal investigator has failed to remedy deficiencies identified during the formal check within the specified deadline, will be excluded from further evaluation by the UPJŠ VVGS Committee. The project principal investigator will be informed of this decision in writing.
5. For projects requiring an opinion from the Ethics Committee of UPJŠ in Košice (e.g. in accordance with Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on healthcare, services related to the provision of healthcare, and on amendments to certain acts, as amended; Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic No. 436/2012 Coll., laying down details concerning requirements for the protection of animals used for scientific or educational purposes; Government Regulation of the Slovak Republic No. 377/2012 Coll., laying down requirements for the protection of animals used for scientific or educational purposes, as amended; etc.), a written application for an opinion from the relevant ethics committee must be submitted as an essential part of the project documentation. If the application for an ethics committee opinion is missing, the project cannot be evaluated and the UPJŠ VVGS Committee will exclude it from further consideration. The principal investigator will be informed of this decision in writing. Project activities subject to ethical review or authorization by the relevant authority may not be commenced, and the funds allocated for such activities may not be used, until the relevant positive opinion or authorization has been obtained.

Article 12

Evaluation of VVGS Projects

1. Project proposals for consideration by the Committee are submitted by its chairperson according to the project registration number, generally twice a year (in the last week of April and October).
2. The Committee members are required to maintain confidentiality regarding all facts and information which they become aware of in the course of their work on the Committee.
3. Targeted research projects are submitted and evaluated in two areas:
 - a) social sciences and humanities,
 - b) other sciences.
4. Projects for university teachers, researchers, and full-time doctoral students who have not reached the age of 35 by the date of commencement of the project, as well as projects to support integration of researchers into research, are submitted and evaluated jointly.
5. The Committee arranges for each project to be evaluated by two reviewers, at least one of whom is an expert from another faculty, university, or scientific institution, or an expert from professional practice. Each reviewer assesses the application for financial support for the project via the CCVaPP UPJŠ portal within the deadline set by the Committee, according to individual criteria (originality, ethical aspects of the project, scientific contribution, feasibility and formal quality of the project, previous results of the applicants, and the professional competence of the principal investigator and their research team).

6. If the appointed reviewers fail to evaluate the project, the project rapporteur shall appoint substitute reviewers. In exceptional cases, if two evaluation reports are not available by the specified deadline (including evaluation reports from substitute reviewers) and, due to time constraints, it is not possible to secure another reviewer, the chairperson of the VVGS Committee shall appoint a member of the VVGS Committee as a reviewer within a reasonable period before the VVGS Committee meeting.
7. Evaluation reports form part of the internal documentation of the VVGS Committee used for project evaluation and therefore are not disclosed externally.
8. Each member of the VVGS Committee is required to study the projects subject to evaluation by the VVGS Committee prior to its meeting.
9. Members of the VVGS Committee evaluate VUaVP35 projects primarily from the following perspectives:
 - a) originality and expected scientific contribution of the project,
 - b) appropriateness of the planned use of funds,
 - c) previous results of the project investigators,
 - d) formal quality of the project proposal.
10. Members of the VVGS Committee evaluate PCOV projects primarily from the following perspectives:
 - a) originality and scientific contribution of the project,
 - b) quality of the methodology and research proposal,
 - c) experience and capacity of the research team,
 - d) impact, significance, and usability of the project,
 - e) budget and its efficiency.
11. Each member of the VVGS Committee with a voting right anonymously evaluates each project by assigning points on the voting sheet. A member of the VVGS Committee must abstain from voting on a project proposal where a conflict of interest exists. If at least five members of the Committee with a voting right have evaluated a project, the VVGS Committee shall, when calculating the points, discard the highest and lowest score. The number of voters is then be reduced by two when determining the average score. The average score awarded to the project by the VVGS Committee has a 60% weighting, while the average score awarded by the reviewers has a 40% weighting. The final score of the project is determined by the sum of the weighted score assigned by the VVGS Committee and the weighted score assigned by the reviewers.
12. Based on the number of points obtained, the projects are ranked, and the VVGS Committee determines, taking into account the funds allocated by the Rector to the respective grant scheme, the minimum score required for a project to be recommended for funding.
13. The Committee does not recommend funding a project or suspends the use of allocated funds by a principal investigator, if the principal investigator received financial support for a project during the previous three years and failed, within the specified deadline, to submit a project implementation report or a report on the use of the allocated funds, or if the project was evaluated as "objectives not achieved." If any of the above circumstances is discovered only after the financial support has been approved, the VVGS Committee submits a proposal to the Rector of UPJŠ to suspend the use of the allocated funds. The decision to suspend the use of financial support is made by the Rector of UPJŠ.
14. The Committee excludes from evaluation the projects where it is demonstrated that the research teams are from the same workplace and that the topic of the submitted projects is identical to, related to, or interconnected with another project submitted under the same call in any grant scheme.
15. In the case of SAS-UPJŠ ERC Visiting Fellowship Grants projects, following a formal check of the completeness of the required information and fulfilment of the project requirements, the Committee proceeds as follows:

- a) the chairperson of the VVGS Committee formally requests the dean of the relevant faculty to nominate three internationally recognized experts in the field in which the application was submitted to the VVGS Committee. These experts participate as reviewers in the decision-making process concerning the award or non-award of financial support for the project.
- b) The VVGS Committee selects two experts from among the nominated experts to be asked to prepare an external evaluation report of the project.
- c) The chairperson of the VVGS Committee contacts the selected reviewers and requests that they prepare their evaluation reports.
- d) In their evaluation reports, the reviewers primarily evaluate whether:
 - the applicant has demonstrated research quality and outputs at a level corresponding to ERC requirements;
 - the applicant has submitted a feasible fellowship/stay plan;
 - the applicant has submitted a realistic outline of a future ERC project proposal;
 - they recommend the project for funding or not.
- e) The secretary of the Committee distributes the received expert evaluation reports to the members of the Committee.
- f) Based on the conclusions of the evaluation reports and its own expert assessment, the Committee submits to the Rector a recommendation to approve or reject the financial support for the project.
- g) The Rector's decision to approve or reject financial support for the project is binding.

Article 13

Management of VVGS Funds

1. UPJŠ provides the principal investigators of selected research projects with funds under the "goods and services" category, with a maximum of 50% of the planned funds permitted to be used for "travel reimbursements and conference fees." In justified cases, it is possible to plan funds in the above categories to a greater extent if the principal investigator justifies the appropriate use of the funds in view of the nature of the planned research (e.g. field research, theoretical research, etc.). At the same time, the principal investigator may not use all allocated funds to cover participation in a single event (conference, seminar, training, etc.).
2. Only members of the research team are authorized to use the funds. A condition for using funds for conference participation is the active participation of the project investigator at the conference, documented by an output such as a presentation, poster, abstract, contribution to conference proceedings, etc. Only one investigator may participate in connection with a one output.
3. The Rector of UPJŠ allocates the funds for the implementation of the project to the faculty or unit of UPJŠ of which the principal investigator is a member, in the form of an increase in the allocation for science and research. If the project investigators are from different faculties or units of UPJŠ, the funds are allocated to the respective faculties or units of UPJŠ according to the proportions determined by the principal investigator. The faculty or unit of UPJŠ of which the principal investigator is a member is responsible for the administration of the project implementation.
4. The agreement on the allocation of funds for the implementation of the project is concluded between UPJŠ and the principal investigator.
5. The principal investigator is responsible to the Rector of UPJŠ for the appropriate and effective use of the allocated funds, and neither a faculty nor a unit of UPJŠ may make decisions regarding their use. This is without prejudice to the obligation of UPJŠ, the relevant faculty, or unit of UPJŠ to carry out financial audit and ensure that the use of funds complies with generally binding legal regulations, the approved budget of UPJŠ,

and the internal regulations of UPJŠ. A faculty or unit of UPJŠ may not make the implementation of a project conditional upon any requirement to cover the operating costs of the faculty or unit of UPJŠ.

6. If the principal investigator, for serious reasons (e.g. termination of employment, interruption or early termination of doctoral studies, a long-term stay at another institution, etc.), is unable to continue implementing the project, they shall propose a new principal investigator in writing. The proposed new principal investigator expresses their consent by signing the proposal letter. At the same time, the principal investigator submits to the Department of Project Support of CCVaPP UPJŠ a report and accounting records of all funds used up to the date of the change of principal investigator. The new principal investigator may only be a member of the research team of the respective project who meets all the conditions stipulated by the VVGS Statute. The change of principal investigator is subject to approval by the VVGS Committee. The VVGS Committee assesses the proposal for the change of principal investigator and submits a proposal for its approval to the Rector of UPJŠ. The change of principal investigator takes effect upon its approval by the Rector of UPJŠ and the execution of the corresponding amendment to the agreement. If it is not possible to appoint a new principal investigator, the principal investigator shall be required to submit a report on the status of project implementation and accounting records of all funds used. The project is then terminated with immediate effect, and any unused funds are returned to the UPJŠ budget.

Article 14

Publication of Results

1. The list of supported projects, including the project registration numbers, project titles, and the amount of allocated funds, is published on the CCVaPP UPJŠ website under the section Project Support (UPJŠ VVGS Grant Scheme).
2. Once a year, the Vice-Rector responsible for the VVGS agenda informs the UPJŠ Rector's Council of the number of applications for VVGS financial support, the number of supported projects, and the amount of funds allocated for financial support.

Article 15

Change in the Project Implementation Period

1. In exceptional situations or in the event of extraordinary circumstances, the principal investigator may request that the Committee suspend the project implementation period, extend the project implementation period, or terminate the project earlier. The request must be submitted in writing, stating the reasons for the requested change to the project implementation period, as well as the date from which it is planned to resume project implementation. A request to suspend or extend the project implementation period may be submitted repeatedly. A request to suspend a project for an indefinite period is not permitted.
2. The Committee assesses each request on an ad hoc basis, taking into account the specific circumstances stated by the applicant, and is not bound by its previous decisions or positions in similar cases.
3. If, pursuant to paragraph 1 of this Article, the project implementation period is extended by two years beyond the originally planned project completion date, the principal investigator shall be required to submit a project progress report explaining why the project remains relevant. The Committee reviews and evaluates the report. If it concludes that the project is no longer relevant, it shall instruct the principal investigator to complete the project within the specified deadline.

4. If, for objective reasons, it is not possible to complete the project in such a way as to achieve its stated objectives, the principal investigator may request the Committee to terminate the project without further implementation.
5. If a project is terminated without being implemented, early terminated with only partial achievement of its objectives, or suspended, the principal investigator shall be required to return any unused funds.

Article 16

Final Evaluation of Projects

1. The principal investigator submits a final project report on the implementation of the project, its results, and the use of the allocated funds electronically via the CCVaPP UPJŠ portal and in printed form, generated as an output of the CCVaPP UPJŠ portal, within the deadline specified in the agreement on the provision of funds to the CCVaPP UPJŠ, or to the registry office of the UPJŠ Rectorate. The final report must also include published outputs in electronic form (in PDF format or another digital copy of the output), attached to the electronic version of the report.
2. A condition for the successful completion of a project is the fulfilment of the outputs defined in the project proposal.
3. Final project reports are evaluated by the Committee which may request an assessment from additional experts. In evaluating the final reports, the results achieved, the quality of the outputs, and the economy and effectiveness of the use of the allocated funds are assessed.
4. Following completion of the project, the achievement of its objectives is evaluated using the following ratings:
 - a) objectives achieved excellently,
 - b) objectives achieved,
 - c) objectives achieved conditionally,
 - d) objectives not achieved.
5. The Committee may submit a proposal to the Rector of UPJŠ to award the principal investigators of projects that have been rated "objectives achieved excellently".
6. If, following completion of the project, the project is rated "objectives achieved conditionally," the principal investigator shall be required to provide the missing project results within a deadline specified by the Committee. If the specified deadline expires without the missing results being submitted, the project shall be rated "objectives not achieved."
7. The Vice-Rector responsible for the VVGS agenda informs the UPJŠ Rector's Council of the results of the evaluation of the final reports.

Article 17

Final Provisions

1. This Decision enters into force on the day it is signed by the Rector of UPJŠ and takes effect on 1 September 2026.
2. Upon the entry into force of this Decision, Rector's Decision No. 22/2023, issuing the Statute of the Internal Scientific Grant System of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, ref. No. REK000386/2023-ÚPA/4757 dated 3 November 2023, as amended by Amendment No. 1, shall cease to be valid and effective

3. Projects for which financial support was approved by the Rector of UPJŠ prior to the entry into force of this Decision, and the related legal relationships, shall be governed by the previous regulation, i.e. Rector's Decision No. 22/2023, issuing the Statute of the Internal Scientific Grant System of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, ref. No. REK000386/2023-ÚPA/4757 dated 3 November 2023, as amended by Amendment No. 1.
4. Applications submitted on the basis of a call announced prior to the entry into force of this Decision shall be assessed in accordance with the previous regulation, i.e. Rector's Decision No. 22/2023, issuing the Statute of the Internal Scientific Grant System of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, ref. No. REK000386/2023-ÚPA/4757 dated 3 November 2023, as amended by Amendment No. 1.

Prof. Daniel Pella, MD, PhD.
Rector