

## **Admission and evaluation process of general research topics**

### *1. General Instructions*

The supervisor or co-supervisor must submit the proposal for the general research topic and other required documents electronically via the Intranet of the Faculty of Medicine ([Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka – MEDRI](#)) by accessing the SharePoint Portal MEDRI 2024 and selecting the link COMMITTEES – Requests to Committees / 1. COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES / APPLICATION FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCH TOPIC PROPOSAL. Access to the portal is granted using the AAI@Edu identity. Notifications regarding the status of the application and all other inquiries are handled exclusively through this electronic system. Accordingly, applicants are required to monitor their application status and adhere to the deadlines specified in the timeline published on the faculty's website ([Enrolment in doctoral studies – Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka](#)) for the respective academic year. Once the Committee for Scientific Research Activity approves the proposed general research topics, they will be forwarded to the Doctoral School Council and the Faculty Council for final approval.

The evaluation process for the proposed general research topic consists of two steps:

1. Administrative and technical review
2. Scientific evaluation and assessment

General research topic proposals that do not pass the administrative and technical review (e.g., supervisor capacity, correctly completed proposal application form, required character limits for certain sections, maximum number of pages) will not be considered, and the applicant will be notified through the research topic submission system.

After the application deadline the applicant may review the status of application; however, self-initiated changes or additions to the project proposal or submitted documents are not permitted. In such cases, the research proposal will be excluded from further evaluation.

### *2. Mandatory Documentation*

Mandatory documentation for submitting a research topic proposal includes a general research topic proposal, supervisor/co-supervisor capacity, supervisor/co-supervisor CV, and a list of projects in which the proposer(s) are involved as a principal investigator or collaborator.

If the proposed research involves collaboration with institutions outside the Faculty of Medicine or the University of Rijeka, the written consent of these institutions for collaboration must be provided. In addition, written consent is required if the research involves collaboration between departments within the Faculty of Medicine.

The Committee reserves the right to request additional documentation if deemed necessary to ensure the feasibility of the proposed research. All documents uploaded to the system must be in PDF format.

### *3. Research Topic Proposal*

The research topic proposal must be written using the official "Application Form" in a Word document, which is available on the faculty's website. The completed form must be uploaded to the system as a PDF document. The text should be concise, precise, and with consistent terminology. When submitting the application, the technical formatting instructions provided in the application form must be followed. The required formatting includes: font: calibri, size 11, single line spacing.

The general research topic proposal can be written in Croatian or English. It must be aimed at gaining new knowledge and make a clear scientific contribution. Accordingly, the project proposal should clearly state the hypotheses, objectives and scientific contribution.

### *4. Supervisor /Co-Supervisor Requirements*

The proposer(s) (supervisor/co-supervisor) of the research topic must meet the mentorship capacity requirements, as well as the conditions outlined in the Decision on Minimum Criteria for the Selection of Supervisors at the University of Rijeka ([Odlukom o minimalnim kriterijima](#)) and the Doctoral School program ([Doctoral School](#)). When providing justification regarding the supervisor's or co-supervisor's contribution, it is not necessary to include information from their CV.

### *5. Funding of the Research Topic Proposal*

It is mandatory to indicate the source(s) of funding for the proposed research topic. Self-funding by the doctoral candidate is not allowed. It is recommended that the research topic proposal and the conduct of the research be funded as part of a scientific research project. The following sources of funding will not be accepted: a) projects whose research has been completed six months prior to the submission of the general research topic proposal, b) projects that are planned for future application but have not yet been funded.

In the following cases, written approval for funding must be provided:

- a) if the supervisor/co-supervisor is a collaborator of the fundig project. Written consent from the project leader must be submitted.
- b) if the financial support is provided by a department of the Faculty of Medicine or another institutions within or outside the University of Rijeka where the supervisor/co-supervisor is employed. A written consent of the head of the structural unit where the research will be conducted or the head the institution must be provided.
- c) donations; the source of funding must be clearly stated, including details of the donor/organisation providing the financial support.

### *6. References*

References should be listed in the order in which they appear in the "References" section of the application form. In the text of the research topic proposal, references should be cited using numbers in parentheses. There is no specific required citation style; however, the maximum number of references is limited to 15.

### 7. Scientific Evaluation and Assessment of the Research Topic

The proposed research topic will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with previous research – Does the topic logically follow from the supervisor's/co-supervisor's previous research?
- Clarity of the research hypothesis – Is the hypothesis clearly formulated?
- Clarity of the research objectives – Are the research objectives clearly defined?
- Feasibility within the given timeframe – Can the objectives be realistically achieved within 3 to 6 years?
- Originality and contribution – Is the proposed research original, and does it contribute to new knowledge in the field of the study?
- Institutional capacity – Does the supervisor (or institution) have at least 50% of the facilities and equipment required to conduct the proposed research, and to what extent does reliance on other institutions pose a risk to the research?
- Collaboration and contribution of the co-supervisor (for co-supervised research only) – Is the contribution of both co-supervisors equal?
- Complementarity of co-supervisors' expertise (for co-mentored research only) – Do the co-mentors roles logically complement each other in the context of the proposed research?

Each criterion is scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with the option of awarding half-point scores (e.g., 1.5; 2.5; 3.5; 4.5). The minimum score for each criterion is 3.5. If any criterion receives a score lower than 3.5, the research topic cannot receive a passing evaluation.

The scoring scale is as follows:

- 1.0 – Negative evaluation
- 2.0 – Insufficiently defined; requires significant revision
- 3.0 – Needs modifications
- 4.0 – Well defined; requires minor revisions
- 5.0 – Excellent; fully meets the requirements

The Committee for Scientific Research Activity appoints a three-member working group from among its members to evaluate research topic proposals.

#### First Round – Individual Assessment

Each member of the working group independently evaluates each research topic proposal based on established criteria and assigns a score.

#### Second Round – Score Harmonization

The scores assigned by all members are compared and adjusted so that no single criterion differs by more than 1.5 points between the evaluators.

After harmonization, an average score is calculated for each criterion and the entire research topic proposal.

#### Final Decision – Passing Grade

A research topic proposal is considered to have passed if the overall average score is at least 3.5, and the average score for each criterion is  $\geq 3.5$ .