



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS**

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**RULES OF OPERATION FOR THE EVALUATION THEMATIC COMMITTEES OF
THE HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

(1st amendment)

2nd Call

for H.F.R.I. Scholarships to PhD Candidates

(2nd amendment)

(REF. NO. 9242/07.02.2019)

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1 GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The Rules of Operation for the Evaluation Thematic Committees of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (henceforth the "Foundation") establish, as enacted in art. 5 par. 5 of Law 4429/2016, the rules and the functioning process of the Thematic Committee ("TC") of experts, which shall evaluate the applications submitted under the 2nd Call for H.F.R.I. Scholarships to PhD Candidates (1st Amendment) with Ref. No. 1902/2018 (henceforth the "Call", the "Applications"). The applications shall be evaluated by nine (9) Thematic Committees. Each Thematic Committee corresponds to one of the Scientific Areas specified in Part 2 of the Call. If deemed necessary due to the specialized scope of the Applications, a non-binding evaluation of one or more Applications may be requested from one or more independent experts, appointed by decision of the Scientific Council ("SC"). The proper functioning of the Thematic Committees is supervised by the Foundation's SC, according to article 8, par. 9, point c of Law 4429/2016, and is governed by these Rules and complementarily by Law 4429/2016, the Code of Administrative Procedure and the Call.

2 FORMATION - ESTABLISHMENT - OPERATION OF THE THEMATIC COMMITTEES

2.1 Each Thematic Committee is established by decision of the Foundation's Scientific Council (SC), following a relevant recommendation presented by such SC member, who comes from the scientific sector corresponding to the Scientific Area of the Thematic Committee and specified in the article 8 par. 1 of Law 4429/2016. Each Thematic Committee consists of the Chair, the deputy Chair, the other full members and the secretary. The SC supervises the proper functioning of the Thematic Committees, guided by the principles of meritocracy and transparency. Within the context of their supervising duty, the SC member, who comes from the scientific sector corresponding to the Scientific Area of the Thematic Committee, may participate in the meetings of the Thematic Committee, without being entitled to vote or express their opinion during the evaluation of the applications. The Thematic Committees are assisted in their work by scientific associates or employees of the Foundation. The details of the Thematic Committee members are published after the evaluation process is completed.

2.2 The members of the Thematic Committees and the independent experts consist of renowned scientists/experts in the corresponding Scientific Area, drawn from the Certified Evaluators Register of the GSRT, which is provisioned in article 27 of Law 4310/2014, who possess qualifications related to the scope of the Applications pertaining to the respective Scientific Area. The Thematic Committees operate based on the highest reliability standards, so as to ensure impartiality, objectivity and integrity in the evaluation process. If the SC finds out that there are no specialist scientists as required for the evaluation of all Applications or the existing ones do not cover the needs of a specific evaluation, specialist scientists from Greece or abroad, not included in the Register of Certified Evaluators are appointed as Thematic Committee members and independent experts by decision of the Scientific Council.

2.3 SC members of the Foundation as well as their spouses or relatives by blood or by affinity up to second degree may not be Thematic Committee members or independent experts. Thematic Committee members who are spouses or relatives by blood or by affinity up to fourth degree may not participate in the same Thematic Committee meeting.

2.4 The Chair of the Thematic Committee determines the day, the time and the location of the Thematic Committee meetings, invites the members to the meeting and evaluates suggestions and requests aiming at improving the procedures. The secretary of the Thematic Committee announces the invitation along with the agenda to the members at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting, using any suitable means (ex. e-mail, fax). The Thematic Committee meetings are held secretly and may also be conducted by teleconferencing.

2.5 The Thematic Committee is lawfully convened, when more than half of the appointed full members take part in its composition (quorum). The quorum should be maintained throughout the meeting. If any member, that had not been previously invited, is absent, the meeting is unlawful.

2.6 The Thematic Committees decide by absolute majority of the present members. If such majority is not possible, the voting is repeated, until an absolute majority is obtained by the accession of those expressing a minority opinion each time to one of the prevailing groups. In any case, if there is equality of votes, the Chair's vote shall prevail. Any member abstaining from voting or casting a blank vote is considered to be absent.

2.7 Voting is done openly. Minutes are taken in the meetings of the Thematic Committees. The minutes mention in particular the names and the capacity of present members, the location and the time of the meeting as well as the issues discussed. The opinions and the names of the outvoted members are recorded in the minutes. The minutes that include the final evaluation results along with a personalised reference and documentation of the evaluation decision (list of the applications' scores and detailed justification) are taken by the secretary and are ratified by the Chair. The signature of the Chair or the Deputy Chair is enough to substantiate legal grounds for the acts of the Thematic Committee.

3 PURPOSE/WORK OF THE THEMATIC COMMITTEES AND THE EXPERTS

The work of the Thematic Committees and the independent experts is to evaluate the Applications based on the criteria provided in Law 4429/2016 and in the Call. The Applications are classified into Scientific Areas (SA) and scientific fields based on the PhD Candidate's pertinent statement during the submission of the Application. The initial classification may be revised, if during the evaluation it is found out that the Application's scope falls under a different Scientific Area, according to the provisions of the Call. An Application may be transferred to a different SA in agreement with the Chairs of the respective Thematic Committees of the SAs. Once they accept their appointment and they sign a Declaration of confidentiality and non-conflict of interest, the members of each Thematic Committee have access to all files of the Applications submitted under the respective Scientific Area. The independent experts may access the files of the Application, which their non-binding evaluation was requested for, once they accept their appointment and sign a Declaration of confidentiality and non-conflict of interest.

The Thematic Committees decide for the evaluation of the proposals.

4 CONFIDENTIALITY

The evaluation is governed by absolute and full confidentiality throughout the entire process and after its completion. The Thematic Committee members and the independent experts owe full confidentiality before, during and after the evaluation, as to the entire evaluation process.

5 IMPARTIALITY - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

5.1 The Thematic Committee members and the independent experts shall avoid any situation, in which conflict of interest could arise, and must guarantee an impartial judgement, when exercising their responsibilities. Thematic Committee members and independent experts should refrain from any act or process that suggests participation in a decision making event, if: a) the outcome of an affair is related to the satisfaction of personal interests or b) they are spouses or relatives by blood or by affinity, in direct line to any degree and collaterally up to fourth degree, of any interested party (PhD Candidate, Supervising Professor or members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee) or c) they have a special connection or a particular relation with or show hostility towards the interested parties. A Thematic Committee member or an independent expert is considered to have a special connection or a particular relation with the interested parties or to show hostility towards them, when (for example):

- the Application comes from the same Higher Educational Institution or Higher Military Educational Institution Department, where the Thematic Committee member/independent expert serves;
- the Thematic Committee member/independent expert serves in the same Higher Educational Institution/Higher Military Educational Institution Department or Research Centre - Institute or University Research Institute that is specified in the Application as a Collaborating Organization;
- the member or the independent expert or their spouses or their relatives by blood or by affinity, in direct line to any degree and collaterally up to fourth degree, are Supervising Professors or members of the Three-member Advisory Committee of the PhD Candidate;
- the applicant is their spouse or relative by blood or by affinity, in direct line to any degree and collaterally up to fourth degree;
- they are administrative members of the Institution or a Collaborative Organisation (if applicable), where the doctoral thesis is authored;
- they took part in the preparation or the writing of the Application;
- during the last five (5) years they made common publications or participated in the same research teams with the PhD Candidate, the Supervising Professor or the members of the Three-member Advisory Committee of the PhD Candidate.

5.2 A conflict of interest shall arise when Thematic Committee members / independent experts have private or personal interests, which may or seem to affect the impartial and objective performance of their duties. Private or personal interests are any possible benefits provided to them, their spouses or their relatives up to second degree.

5.3 In case the Thematic Committee member or the independent expert estimates any time during the evaluation process that they have reasons to refrain from decision making activities because one or more situations of those referred in par. 5.1 and 5.2 of this document or in the "Declaration of

confidentiality and non-conflict of interest” apply, they have to declare this immediately to the Chair or the Deputy Chair of the Thematic Committee and refrain from any act. In such cases, the Chair of the Thematic Committee informs immediately the SC of the Foundation and the Council decides as soon as possible.

5.4 All interested parties are entitled to submit an exemption application for a Thematic Committee member / independent expert in all stages of the evaluation process. The application is submitted to the Foundation’s Scientific Council, which decides as soon as possible. The SC may also decide about the exemption proprio motu.

6 PUBLICITY

The evaluation results as well as the details of the independent experts and the Thematic Committee members are published after the completion of the evaluation process.

The Director of the H.F.R.I.’s Scientific Council

Professor Emeritus Xenofon Verykios