

Rules for the MNU Research Fellowship Competition

1. General Provisions

These guidelines establish the selection process for the MNU Research Fellow. For the 2024-2025 academic year, **5 scholarships** are available for candidates with outstanding academic achievements and research potential.

2. Requirements for contestants

1. Level of expertise:
 - a. MNU master's students in their first, second year of education who demonstrate outstanding academic performance and/or research potential.
 - b. MNU doctoral students in their first, second, and third years of education who are actively engaged in research and/or have the potential to do so.
 - c. Young scientists under 25 years of age, working in universities or scientific institutes and with significant achievements in their scientific field.
2. Selection criteria:
 - a. Academic achievements: Successful studies, publications in scientific journals, participation in conferences, awards for scientific activities.
 - b. Research potential: Originality and relevance of the research topic, well-developed research plan.
 - c. Research Skills: Demonstrate analytical and independent research skills.
 - d. Motivation and ambition: Willingness to devote themselves to scientific activities at Maqsut Narikbayev University and to contribute to the scientific community..
3. Documents for submission:
 - a. Academic CV.
 - b. Research design with objectives, methods and expected results.
 - c. At least one letter of recommendation from a professor of any scientific school or research centre of Maqsut Narikbayev University.
 - d. Letter of motivation (see writing requirements and assessment criteria in the appendix).

3. Selection Committee

1. The committee consists of 9 members and is formed from representatives of scientific schools, AMS and university professors. The chairman and secretary of the committee are elected. All decisions are taken by majority of votes.
2. Functions of the committee:
 - a. The committee evaluates the submitted documents according to the established criteria using a 100-point system.
 - b. Conducts interviews with shortlisted candidates who are invited to present research projects and answer questions from the committee.
 - c. The committee determines the winners based on the total score and the results of the interview. All decisions of the committee are final and not subject to review.

4. Stages of the competition

1. Submission of applications:
 - a. Candidates shall submit a complete package of documents within the established deadline.
2. Evaluation of applications:
 - a. Preliminary selection: the Committee checks the completeness and compliance of the submitted documents with the requirements.
 - b. Evaluation Criteria: Academic achievements, research potential and the quality of the proposed research plan are assessed.
 - c. Point system: Each member of the commission evaluates applications on a scale from 1 to 100 points.
 - d. Candidates who are in the top 30 per cent of scores are considered to be shortlisted and progressed to the next stage of the selection process. The remaining candidates shall be considered unselected and may not apply for this competition until at least the next academic year.
3. Interview and presentation of projects:
 - a. Shortlisted candidates are invited for an interview to present their research plans and answer questions from the panel.
 - b. Final evaluation: The final scholarship award decision is based on the results of the interview and the evaluation of the research plan.
4. Announcement of winners:
 - a. The winners are announced on the University's website and through official social media profiles. The winners are sent official letters inviting them to sign a scholarship agreement.

Requirements for motivation letter / assessment criteria

A motivation letter is an important element of the application in which the candidate must demonstrate their interests and reasons for applying for the MNU Research Fellowship competition.

Main requirements for a motivation letter:

- 1) Length: The letter should be between 500 and 800 words.
- 2) Content:
 - a) Candidate's Goals: Description of personal and professional goals related to scientific endeavours.
 - b) Justification for the choice of research topic: Explanation of the relevance and significance of the proposed research to science and society.
 - c) Connection to the university's scientific school: Justification for the selection of MNU and participation in a scientific school that supports the research topic.
 - d) Professional and Academic Achievements: A summary of previous achievements that demonstrate a commitment to the success of the proposed research plan.
 - e) Motivation for the Fellowship: Why this particular fellowship is important to the candidate's academic and professional growth.
 - f) Contribution to the scientific community: A description of how the candidate plans to use the results of the research to benefit the research school and the scientific community in general.

Evaluation criteria for the motivation letter:

- 1) Clarity and coherence of presentation (0-20 marks):
 - a) How clearly and coherently the candidate's thoughts are presented.
 - b) The structure of the letter (introduction, main part, conclusion).
- 2) Relevance of goals and motivation for scholarly activity (0-20 points):
 - a) Consistency of the candidate's personal and professional goals with the objectives of the scholarship.
 - b) Understanding of the significance of the research topic and its contribution to scholarship.
- 3) Academic and research potential (0-20 points):
 - a) Description of specific academic achievements that demonstrate readiness for high-level academic activity.
 - b) Capacity for independent research work.
- 4) Motivation and commitment to professional development (0-20 points):
 - a) How well the candidate demonstrates motivation for further development and to accomplish their goals.
 - b) Clarity of the rationale for the necessity of scholarship to advance in a research career.
- 5) Potential contribution to the scientific community (0-20 points):
 - a) The extent to which the proposed research plan is relevant to the needs and development of the research community and the university.
 - b) The expected results of the research and their impact on the scientific field.

Candidates' research design requirements / assessment criteria

Research Design Requirements:

1. Relevance of the topic:
 - a. The research topic should be relevant and meaningful to current scientific and societal needs.
 - b. There should be a clear rationale for the choice of topic and its relevance to science and society.
 - c. The research topic must be aligned with scientific schools.
2. Aims and objectives of the research:
 - a. Clearly stated goals and objectives of the study.
 - b. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).
3. Methodology:
 - a. A detailed description of the methods and approaches that will be used to achieve the objectives of the study.
 - b. Justification for the choice of methods, including their advantages and possible limitations.
4. Expected results:
 - a. A description of the expected results of the study and their contribution to science.
 - b. An assessment of the potential impact on the development of a scientific school or the solution of current problems.
5. Structure and outline of the work:
 - a. A detailed plan for the execution of the research, including key milestones and timeframes.
 - b. A timetable for key milestones and possible timelines for milestones.
6. Resources and support:
 - a. An assessment of the resources required to carry out the study, including access to laboratories, databases, equipment, and funding.
 - b. Mention of support from research supervisors or advisors.
7. Literature review:
 - a. A brief review of existing research on the chosen topic, identifying gaps and justifying the need for new research.
 - b. Referring to relevant and credible sources in the field of study.

Criteria for evaluating the research design:

1. Relevance and significance (0-15 points):
 - a. How relevant and important the research topic is to the industry concerned.
 - b. Significance of the research for the development of science and solving practical problems.
2. Aims and objectives (0-15 points):
 - a. Clarity and realism of the goals and objectives.
 - b. Relevance of the goals to the overall objectives of the study and the feasibility of achieving them within the proposed plan.
3. Methodology (0-20 points):
 - a. The validity of the methods and approaches chosen.
 - b. Relevance of the methods to the objectives and adequacy of their application.
4. Expected results (0-20 points):
 - a. Feasibility and significance of the expected results.
 - b. Assessment of the potential of the results for scientific progress and practical application.
5. Structure and plan of work (0-10 points):
 - a. Logicality and detail of the work plan.
 - b. Appropriateness of the time frame and stages of the research to the proposed schedule.
6. Resources and support (0-10 points):
 - a. Justification of resource and support needs.
 - b. Realistic estimate of the resources needed to complete the study.
7. Literature review (0-10 points):
 - a. Quality and completeness of the literature review.
 - b. Candidate's ability to identify gaps in existing research and justify the need for new research.