CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS

FOR THE PTE DR. FERENC JAKAB PROOF OF CONCEPT (POC) GRANT

I. Purpose of the Call

The University of Pécs aims to become a leading research, development and innovation centre in the region and in Hungary, alongside its educational and scientific activities.

The University of Pécs attaches particular importance to the economic utilisation of intellectual assets generated at the University. To this end, in 2019 it established the **PTE Proof of Concept (PoC)** funding scheme, which it has operated ever since to facilitate the market introduction and exploitation of intellectual assets. This scheme is one of the first key components of the **PTE Innovation Support Programme**. In addition to basic research, the primary objective of this Call is to support product validation and product development. The Call enables the technological and market validation of scientific or technical results generated by research groups, bringing them closer to the level of readiness required for research utilisation.

II. Principles of the Call

The Student PoC Programme is not intended to support finished products or established businesses. Rather, it aims to further develop students' research and innovation results or business ideas, validate them in practical and market settings, and facilitate the first concrete steps towards their utilisation.

III. Source of Funding

The Programme is financed by the **Innovation Fund of the Innovation Support Programme**, with a total gross allocation of **HUF 14.25 million**.

IV. Conditions of Support

(1.) Only projects based on ideas with utilisation potential are eligible for support.

(2.) Students holding **active student status at the University of Pécs** may apply, subject to the following conditions:

- each applicant may submit an application for a maximum of one project;
- an individual may participate as a contributor in more than one project;
- students must apply with the support of a mentor-researcher who has an active relationship with the University of Pécs.

To submit a valid application, the applicant must hold active student status during the autumn semester. Active student status will be verified each semester on the basis of data recorded in the Neptun study administration system.

The applicant may involve other students, doctoral students, researchers or other professional contributors in project implementation. The composition of the project team must be appropriate to the professional tasks to be carried out. Where an application is submitted jointly by several students, the student applicants must elect a project leader from among themselves, who will also act as the applicant. The project leader is responsible for coordinating implementation, ensuring cooperation among the student applicants, and maintaining contact with the organisational units involved in the project.

The project leader must be designated at the time of application and shall act as the project's primary contact throughout the entire implementation period. The identity of the project leader may not be changed during implementation; replacement or removal of the project leader is not permitted.

(3.) Expectations for PoC projects selected for support:
- support may be used for development and validation activities aimed at demonstrating the feasibility and business validity of a **technology, product, service, process or other exploitable solution based on the applicant's idea**;
- supported projects must **achieve measurable and documentable technological, professional or business progress during the project period**;
- depending on the initial technology readiness level (TRL), projects should aim to achieve a **higher level of technological readiness** and/or demonstrate the practical applicability of the solution by the end of the project;
- at least one tangible and verifiable result must be achieved through the PoC project, capable of providing a basis for further development, validation, industrial cooperation, market introduction or additional funding;
- projects are expected to **examine exploitation and further-development opportunities**, including, among other things, market application, licensing, the establishment of a spin-off or startup, industrial cooperation, further R&D projects and opportunities for additional external funding;
- by the end of the funding period, the project must clearly demonstrate **the problem that the result can address, the evidence supporting its functionality and/or exploitability, and the specific steps required for further development or utilisation**;
- for every supported project, the results achieved and progress made must be documented against **milestones, and a professional report** must be submitted at the end of the project;
- the outcome of a PoC project does not necessarily have to be a finished product or service ready for the market; however, it must represent meaningful progress in terms of further technological development, validation or utilisation.
- If, during implementation of the PoC project, the successful applicant fails to produce an outcome consistent with the objectives of the Call that represents meaningful progress towards further technological development, validation or utilisation, the applicant shall be deemed not to have fulfilled the professional performance obligations of the project. In such a case, the applicant is not required to repay the funding; however, they will not be eligible to submit an application under the Student PoC Call for the five application years following project closure. This exclusion applies both to submitting an application and to participating in, or receiving remuneration from, another successful application. The exclusion does not affect the applicant's eligibility to participate in other funding programmes.

(4.) The mentor-researcher is responsible for providing professional support to the applicant during project implementation, particularly in further developing the research results, preparing professional decisions, monitoring project progress, and facilitating cooperation with the relevant organisational units of the University of Pécs. The mentor-researcher does not assume responsibility for project implementation on behalf of the applicant, but provides professional support to the student throughout the implementation period.

(5.) Where a mentor-researcher undertakes mentoring duties and participates as a mentor in a project under the Student Proof of Concept (PoC) Call, this mentoring activity may be taken into account in the University of Pécs performance evaluation system (TÉR) and recognised with TÉR points.

(6.) A mentor-researcher may act as a mentor in no more than **three applications** under this Call.

(7.) During the project implementation period, the University of Pécs will provide successful applicants with integrated professional and exploitation-oriented mentoring (PoC mentoring). The purpose of this mentoring is to support professional project implementation and the technological, business and/or market validation of the research results.

As appropriate to the nature and needs of the project, applicants may receive support through PoC mentoring in, among other areas, the following:
- business model consultation;
- IP / patent consultation;
- market validation consultation;
- pitch preparation;

- information on funding opportunities;
- startup/spin-off consultation;
- industrial partner search.

PoC mentoring is provided free of charge to successful applicants. The subject area and timing of mentoring will be determined on the basis of applicants' needs communicated in advance. All successful applicants interested in a given subject area may participate in the relevant information sessions.

(8.) The applicant shall undertake, by means of a declaration, to cooperate with the University's organisational units to ensure that the awarded funding is accounted for properly and within the prescribed deadlines, thereby supporting its efficient use.

(9.) To demonstrate the actual utilisation of the funding, the applicant must submit a **written interim professional and financial report** to the Directorate of Innovation Management and Economic Relations of the University of Pécs (hereinafter: IGI) at the midpoint of the project. The IGI is responsible for the professional and financial review of the reports.

(10.) To demonstrate the actual utilisation of the funding, the applicant must submit a **written final professional and financial report** to the IGI upon completion of the project. The IGI is responsible for the professional and financial review of the final reports.

(11.) Interim and final reports must be submitted using the standard online reporting template provided by the University of Pécs. The report need only describe project progress, results achieved, any deviations and the tasks remaining.

(12.) The student applicant undertakes to cooperate with the IGI and, at its request, to present their development to third parties.

(13.) The applicant shall participate, in cooperation with the IGI, in events organised as part of the PoC Programme.

(14.) If, in light of the professional results achieved during implementation, a partial amendment to the project's original objectives becomes justified, the applicant may initiate a change to the project's professional content and milestones with the involvement of the mentor and subject to the IGI's approval. Such an amendment may not alter the project's fundamental objective.

(15.) The successful applicant must participate in one business and/or industrial property protection training course provided by the University of Pécs during the project implementation period. An exemption may be granted if the applicant proves that, within the two years preceding submission of this application, they participated in and successfully completed a course covering business and/or industrial property protection knowledge as part of their studies. Completion of the previous course must be demonstrated by appropriate documentation (e.g. a Neptun certificate, an entry in the student record book or other reliable evidence of completion).

(16.) If the applicant fails, for reasons attributable to them, to fulfil an obligation during project implementation or financial reporting, the University of Pécs shall call upon the applicant to remedy the deficiency and fulfil the obligation. Exclusion from future calls may be applied only in cases of serious or repeated breach of obligations.

V. Use of the Funding

The funding awarded under this Call **does not constitute a scholarship**, income or any other monetary benefit paid to the applicant, and shall not be paid directly to the applicant.

In accordance with the applicable regulations of the University of Pécs, the mentor-researcher, as the person authorised

to implement the project, shall exercise control over the grant amount. Only costs specified in Section X, paragraph (2) of this Call may be charged to the grant, subject to the mentor-researcher's approval and compliance with the procurement and public procurement rules of the University of Pécs, as well as all other applicable internal regulations and legislation.

VI. Amount and Rate of Support

(1.) Funding rate: 100%.

(2.) Maximum amount of support available per project: HUF 1.5 million.

(3.) The funding amount is gross and therefore includes, where applicable, value added tax (VAT) and employer and employee contributions.

VII. Project Implementation Period

(1.) Maximum project implementation period: **6 months**.

(2.) Successful projects are expected to commence on **1 January 2027**.

VIII. Conditions Relating to Intellectual Property

(1.) As a condition of eligibility for support, the student must offer to the University of Pécs the intellectual creation that is the subject of the project or is generated as a result of the application, in accordance with the University of Pécs Regulations on Intellectual Property Management, which form Annex 58 to the Organisational and Operational Rules (SZMSZ).

IX. Activities Eligible for Support under the Programme

(1.) The following activities are eligible for support during implementation of a PoC project, provided that the project is classified as basic research under the classification applicable to the relevant sector:

- validation of ideas aimed at technology, service or product development; market analysis; novelty searches; and mapping of exploitation opportunities;
- conducting Proof of Concept (verification) experiments and purchasing related materials and consumables;
- prototype development;
- procurement of services required for project implementation (e.g. external examinations, tests, field trials, software development, analytical services, etc.);
- participation in conferences and professional visits that clearly support exploitation potential (a detailed description and justification must be provided);

(2.) Funding may not be requested for a project that commenced before submission of the application form (funding application). Costs of the PoC project may be charged from the day following submission of the funding application, at the applicant's own risk.

X. Funding Information

(1.) Advance payment:

If a PoC project is awarded funding, the maximum advance payable to successful applicants may amount to 100% of the awarded support.

(2.) Eligible Costs

Under this Call, the following costs may be budgeted and accounted for by final beneficiaries:

Personnel costs
- salary costs and related contributions for additional duties (for teaching staff or employees employed by the University of Pécs);
- salary costs and related contributions under a contract for services;

Material and other operating costs
- purchase of research materials and consumables;
- costs of expert services, intellectual work and expert fees;
- registration, travel and accommodation costs associated with travel intended to promote the intellectual asset, support its market utilisation or identify partners;
- services supporting market entry;

Budgetary Restrictions

Under this Call, neither the applicant nor, in the case of a team application, any member of the project team, nor the mentor-researcher may receive any monetary contribution or remuneration from the grant, under any legal title, in connection with project implementation.

Conference and professional visit costs may not exceed a gross amount of HUF 100,000 per project. Participation in a conference or professional visit is subject to the prior approval of the issuing body (IGI).

Procurement carried out under the project must comply with the applicable Public Procurement Act and the Procurement Regulations of the University of Pécs.

XI. Submission of Applications

(1.) Applications must be submitted electronically via https://eugyintezes.pte.hu/ on the basis of the official Call and documents available at https://innovacio.pte.hu.https://innovacio.pte.huhttps://eugyintezes.pte.hu/

(2.) Applications may be submitted from the date of publication of the Call until 23:59 on **19. November 2026.**, or until the available budget has been exhausted. Information on supported applications and exhaustion of the budget will be published at https://innovacio.pte.hu.https://innovacio.pte.hu

XII. Assessment and Administration of Submitted Applications

(1.) The Project Proposal must be submitted in accordance with Section XI. After submission, applicants will receive confirmation of receipt and, where necessary, a request to remedy formal deficiencies. Project Proposals shall be deemed received once confirmation has been sent by email.

(2.) A period of 50 working days is available for assessing submitted applications, with a view to enabling projects to commence as soon as possible. The assessment period begins on the day following the application deadline.

(3.) At the initiative of the issuing body, applicants may be invited to remedy deficiencies on two occasions, with a maximum response period of five working days, for formal and/or professional reasons.

(4.) Following formal and professional review, the University of Pécs will conduct a preliminary assessment of the submitted project proposals using the scoring system set out in Annex 2, with a maximum score of 43 points. Applicants who score fewer than the minimum 26 points will not be eligible for further assessment.

(5.) The funding decision shall be made by the PTE Student PoC Evaluation Committee (hereinafter: the Committee), a three-member body comprising external experts and university leaders. The Committee shall be chaired by the Vice-Rector for Science and Innovation of the University of Pécs.

(6.) Projects that meet the eligibility criteria shall present their applications to the Committee in an in-person or online oral hearing lasting up to five minutes, followed by a further ten minutes for questions and answers. Each Committee member may award up to 10 points for the oral hearing. The Committee shall rank the projects according to the total scores and select successful projects subject to the availability of funds.

(7.) Based on the scores, the Committee may make one of the following three recommendations:
- Funding awarded
- Funding awarded with a reduced total budget
- Rejection due to lack of funds

(8.) The applicant must retain all instruments and documents relating to the funding for ten years from the date of the funding decision.

XIII. Documents to be Submitted:

Mandatory documents:
- mentor-researcher support statement
- budget plan
- applicant's CV
- AI declaration

Additional documents to be attached, where relevant:
- quotation/document substantiating market prices for materials and consumables, services to be procured and conference costs (for external service providers/companies and conferences);
- CV of any student/researcher/lecturer involved in the project.

XIV. Contact

Further information about the Call may be requested as follows:
- by email: poc@pte.hupoc@pte.hu

XV. Annexes

- Annex 1 – Budget Plan Template
- Annex 2 – Scoring System
- Annex 3 – Mentor-Researcher Support Statement
- Annex 4 – AI Declaration