

SPS Guidelines for Researchers' absences and missions

The relevant formal rules on researchers' absences, researchers' missions and mission funding are contained in the [Academic Rules and Regulations](#) and in the [SPS Researchers' Guide](#). You are strongly advised to read these documents in addition to the present guidelines.

It is mandatory for researchers to read the [EUI Policy on Risk Missions](#). If deemed necessary, they must also complete and submit the Risk Assessment Form.

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1. Absences

In accordance with the [Academic Rules and Regulations for the Doctoral and Master's Programmes](#), researchers on a grant must reside in Florence during term time, unless duly authorized. This applies to all 4 years. Students may, nonetheless, be absent from the Institute for certain periods of time, as described below.

Absences can last:

Up to one month	with the written authorization of the supervisor
More than one month	with the written authorization of the Department, and the permission of the Entrance Board (leave of absence)

1.1. Leave of Absence

For absences **lasting 30 days or longer**, researchers must ask for a **leave of absence** (with or without grant). Researchers are strongly advised to submit their request for a leave of absence well before the start of their period away.

How to request a leave of absence

Researchers must write a formal email request to the Head of Department specifying: The reason they will be away, in which place/s and date/s. They must confirm whether their supervisor agrees to this absence.

The email must be sent to SPS.HeadOfDept@EUI.eu with the supervisor and the Departmental Coordinator in copy. The supervisor must express their support of the request.

The request will then be submitted for approval by the Department at the following Departmental Meeting, and subsequently forwarded to the Entrance Board for their consideration if the leave is longer than one month. Researchers will be informed of the outcome of their request by the Academic Service.

When requesting a leave of absence, researchers must read the [EUI Policy on Risk Missions](#). If necessary, they must also complete the Risk Assessment Form and send it to their supervisor.

When a leave of absence is granted, the dates of the researcher's absence/mission/exchange/etc. must correspond to the period of leave that has been approved by the Department and the Entrance Board.

N.B.:

- 1st year researchers are not permitted to go on research missions or spend periods as visiting students at other universities during the three teaching terms.
- 2nd year researchers are not permitted to take extended leaves until they have completed their compulsory requirements.

1.2. Leave of absence WITH grant must be requested for:

1. **Missions of 30 days or more.** Researchers must submit their request for leave well before the intended start of their mission.
Researchers can apply for funding to support their mission (see section 3). If granted, the funds will only be transferred once the Entrance Board has approved the leave.
2. **Exchange programmes.** Researchers can apply for some help towards their travel expenses. Additional details can be found on p. 7.
3. **Parental leave.** In this exceptional case, deadlines can be postponed while the researchers still receive their grant. However, let it be noted that: the deadlines set at the end of the 3rd year, in order to qualify for the 4th year, cannot be postponed. The only exception to this is if the grant authority provides parental leave pay. Please always consult with the Department/Academic Service.
4. **Unpaid internship opportunities.** This case is permitted providing the scope of the internship is directly related to and benefits the researchers' thesis. Leave of absence for internships is not available for researchers in the 1st, 4th or 5th years.

1.3. Leave of absence WITHOUT grant must be requested for:

1. **Paid internship opportunities.** Deadlines are postponed by the full length of the stage, and the grant is resumed when the researchers return.
2. **Medical reasons.** Deadlines are postponed by the full length of the researchers' time away, and their grant is resumed when they return. Any requests must be accompanied by a medical certificate. Please see the Academic Rules and Regulations 12.3.
3. **Parental leave.** Deadlines are postponed and the grant is resumed upon return.

N.B.:

- 1st year researchers are not permitted to go on research missions or spend periods as visiting students at other universities during the three teaching terms.
- 2nd year researchers are not permitted to take extended leaves until they have completed their compulsory requirements.

2. Missions

Researchers are advised to apply for external mission funding wherever possible. Should their mission be fully funded by a source other than the Institute, they are nonetheless asked to notify the Department of their trip by filling in the Mission Order Request form (MOR) and the Mission Authorization form (Section 3.2). This step is necessary for administrative and insurance reasons.

The MOR form also includes the option of completing the Risk Assessment form. If the answer to the question "Are there any particular risks related to this mission?" is YES, researchers must fill in the Risk Assessment form and send it to their supervisor. For missions lasting 30 days or more, researchers must request a leave of absence (Section 1.1).

No cost mission forms can be submitted at any time throughout the year.

3. Missions funding

Mission funding is limited and is granted at the discretion of the Department.

It is available only to researchers currently on grant (and who have not requested an intermission of their researcher's status) and is conditional on researchers having completed their academic requirements to date.

Funding can be requested for **presenting a paper or poster at a conference** and to conduct **fieldwork/research/field interviews**. Limited funding is also available for **summer schools**, conditional upon the school offering essential training that is not available within the internal Institute programme.

Researchers may also apply for **non-mission expenses**, such as special language training essential to their research. However, availability for these is very limited and requests will be paid up to a maximum ceiling. Researchers are advised to contact the Department beforehand in these cases. These requests are made using the same forms (see section 3.2.).

N.B.:

- **1st year researchers:** mission funding is usually not allowed during the 1st year. However, researchers who have had their Prospectus approved in April may apply in the May deadline. It must be noted that payment will only be made after admittance to the 2nd year has been confirmed by the Entrance Board.
- **2nd and 3rd year researchers:** mission funding is granted for fieldwork and other essential trips. Lower priority is given to conferences.
- **4th year researchers:** funding may be granted, but usually only in order to present papers at conferences.

3.1. When to submit a mission funding request

The financial year (Jan – Dec) comprises 3 batches for the assessment of requests and the allocation of funding. The date in which the mission **begins** determines the batch it belongs to.

The table below indicates the deadline by which researchers must submit the necessary forms:

batch	year	dates of mission	deadlines for 2020-2021
3 rd	2020	1 September – 31 December	15 October 2020
1 st	2021	1 January – 30 April	31 January 2021
2 nd	2021	1 May – 31 August	14 May 2021

N.B.:

- **No requests will be accepted after the advertised deadline.**
- **Requests for missions that have taken place in previous batches will not be considered.**

3.2. How to apply for mission funding

MAIN REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Mission funding requests should be submitted to the Department before the set deadlines.

Depending on the duration of the mission, mission funding applications can require a leave of absence.

Up to one month	No additional written authorization required
More than one month	Written authorization of the Department, and permission of the Entrance Board required (leave of absence , see section 1.1.)

N.B.: Researchers must immediately inform the Department if their mission is cancelled or its dates change.

In order to apply for mission funding, researchers must complete and submit to the Department the **Mission Order Request form**, the **Mission Authorization form** as well as additional documentation.

MISSION ORDER REQUEST FORM

Researchers must include place/s, date/s and purpose/s of mission. It must be signed by the researcher and by the supervisor.

This form also includes the option of completing the **Risk Assessment form**. If the answer to the question “Are there any particular risks related to this mission?” is YES, researchers must fill in the Risk Assessment form and send it to their supervisor.

Separate MOR forms must be submitted for each mission. Researchers must use the same form only if they are going on consecutive missions, travelling directly from one location to the other. If they are returning to Florence in between missions, they must use separate forms.

This form is available on the [Guidelines for SPS Researchers](#) webpage.

MISSION AUTHORIZATION FORM

Researchers must complete this form with details regarding their mission and their accommodation plans – in particular whether they are paying for accommodation and for how many days. The form must also be completed with comments by their supervisor, who must use this form to grade requests. The proportion of funding allowed will normally reflect this grading, subject to overall department rules and considerations of equity among applicants. This form must also be signed by the supervisor.

This form is available on the [Guidelines for SPS Researchers](#) webpage.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- ***In the case of paper presentation at a conference***

Researchers must include in their application the **confirmation from the conference organisers that their paper has been accepted** (alternatively, they can include the detailed conference programme). Should they not be able to submit this by the deadline, they can submit it thereafter.

The cost of the registration fees (if any) can be included in the MOR form. For these to be considered by the Department, a **VALID PROOF OF PAYMENT must be provided**. These are:

- A receipt
- A confirmation email from the organizers which indicates that the payment has been made as well as the cost of the registration fees
- A bank statement that indicates the title of the conference as well as the cost of the registration fees

Please note: an Invoice is not considered a proof of payment.

Mission funds (when granted) will not be transferred to the researchers until this documentation is received by the Department.

If researchers are unable to pay the fees before the mission funding deadline, they must attach the programme of the conference to the MOR and the Mission Authorization forms. The programme must indicate the cost of the registration fees. They must send the proof of payment as soon as possible thereafter.

Please note: the Department will not consider mission funding applications for missions that involve only attending a conference, and do not entail the presentation of a paper or of a poster.

- ***In the case of participation at a summer school***

Researchers must contact the Director of Graduate Studies by the end of the 1st term with information regarding the summer school; they must also motivate their request to attend it. This information is crucial for the Department to assess whether a similar course is available or can be organised at the EU.

Should researchers receive the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies to apply for departmental mission funding, they may proceed with their application to the Department.

Researchers must include in their application the programme of the summer school and indicate the courses they intend to take.

The cost of the registration fees (if any) can be included in the MOR form. For these to be considered by the Department, a **VALID PROOF OF PAYMENT must be provided**. These are:

- A receipt
- A confirmation email from the organizers which indicates that the payment has been made as well as the cost of the registration fees
- A bank statement that indicates the title of the summer school as well as the cost of the registration fees

Please note: an Invoice is not considered a proof of payment.

Mission funds (when granted) will not be transferred to the researchers until this documentation is received by the Department.

If researchers are unable to pay the fees before the mission funding deadline, they must attach the programme of the conference to the MOR and the Mission Authorization forms. The programme must indicate the cost of the registration fees. They must send the proof of payment as soon as possible thereafter.

- ***In the case of exchange programme:***

Researchers must request a **leave of absence** when they go on an exchange visit to another university, as is indicated in section 1.2. They can then apply for some help towards their travel expenses by the relevant deadline. Any funding they receive for this mission will be transferred to them only once the leave is fully confirmed by the Entrance Board.

Researchers must submit an **INVITATION LETTER** together with their request of leave.

N.B.: Mission funding is not granted for missions that take place **during** the leave of absence/exchange programme, when the leave of absence refers to missions different from the one for which mission funding is requested. For administrative and insurance reasons, researchers should nonetheless submit a no cost mission request (Section 2.).

- ***In the case of request to purchase a dataset***

Researchers must indicate the cost of the dataset on the MOR form. They must also attach an information sheet which details of the cost of the dataset. Moreover, they must provide proof of payment of the dataset as soon as possible.

FURTHER DOCUMENTATION

These documents do not need to be submitted by researchers together with the main and additional mission funding application documents. The Department will periodically carry out spot checks, asking randomly selected researchers to also provide their travel booking and accommodation confirmations.

Researchers should keep the documentation for up to two months after the end of the batch in which they have applied for mission funding.

N.B. researchers whose mission is deemed risky must provide the Department with all documents (Risk Assessment form, MOR, Mission Authorisation, travel and accommodation confirmations) before the start of their mission.

TRAVEL BOOKING CONFIRMATION

Those researchers who are randomly selected during the spot checks must provide the booking confirmation of their travel tickets (airplane and/or train booking). This applies to every mission case: paper presentation at a conference, fieldwork and research, summer school, other.

It is imperative that researchers inform the Department if their dates of travel should differ from the ones stated on the mission documents, particularly if their mission requires a Risk Assessment form to be submitted.

ACCOMMODATION BOOKING CONFIRMATION

Those researchers who are randomly selected during the spot checks must provide the booking confirmation of their accommodation. This applies to every mission case: paper presentation at a conference, fieldwork and research, summer school, other. This confirmation will allow the Department to confirm the daily allowances in the mission funding calculation.

3.3. Mission funding allocation

Funding decisions are made formally by a committee consisting of the Head of Department, the Departmental Coordinator, a Financial Officer and at least one Researchers' Representative, who meet after each batch deadline. The committee reviews each request and usually works by consensus.

Each financial year (Jan-Dec), the committee decides on the maximum funding that any one researcher can receive in that year. For the current financial year, this ceiling has been set at **1.900 EUR**. This may vary in other financial years. Moreover, **this is not an entitlement** and the average amount actually received is (by definition) well below that maximum.

Mission funding is limited, therefore, in case of excessive demand it is often not possible to meet 100% of each request. In addition, researchers on lower grants will tend to receive more than those on higher grants.

HOW MISSION FUNDING IS CALCULATED:

Mission costs are estimated on the basis of a lump sum for travel which is calculated by taking into account the distance between Florence and the place of mission. Daily allowances are allocated for the working days in order to cover the cost of accommodation. In order for daily allowances to be allocated, researchers must indicate on the Mission Authorisation form for how many days they are paying for accommodation. When granted, daily allowances will reflect the exact days of the booking, and will only take into account the working days indicated on the MOR form.

When applicable, registration fees are also included in the mission funding calculation (please see section 3. on registration fees).

IMPORTANT: mission funding is conditional on the Risk Assessment form being approved (if applicable). Researchers must check whether they need to submit a Risk Assessment form by reading the [EUI Policy on Risk Missions](#), and by answering, on the MOR form, to the following question: "Are there any particular risks related to this mission?" If the answer to this question is YES, they must fill in the Risk Assessment form and send it to their supervisor.

Tables with the maximum amounts reimbursable to the applicants:

Flat-rate contribution to travel expenses	€
Up to 500 km	100
501-1000 km	150
1001-1500 km	250
1501-2000 km	350
Over 2001 km (within Europe)	450
Over 2001 km (outside Europe)	600
Daily allowances per diem	€
up to 15 days	40
from day 16 to day 60	30
Lump sum for travel outside Italy	€
if the place of the mission is outside Italian territory	20

4. Frequently Asked Questions

- Q) I would like to apply for mission funding in order to give a paper presentation at a conference. However, I can only pay the registration fees once I am sure I will get funding for this mission. I, therefore, will not have a receipt to attach to the forms by the deadline. What must I do?
- A) You must attach the programme of the conference to the MOR form and the Authorization form. Most importantly, the programme must indicate the cost of the registration fees. Note that, should you be granted mission funding, you will only receive it once we receive proof of payment of the registration fees (see section 3.).
- Q) Can I apply for mission funding for separate conferences if they all fall within the same batch?
- A) Yes. Providing you have your supervisor's support, there is no limit to the number of missions one can apply for in any one of the three batches. However, please note that the maximum funding that any one researcher can receive in a financial year (Jan-Dec) is currently set at 1900 EUR (see section 3.3.).
- Q) For consecutive missions, do I include them in the same MOR and in the same Mission Authorization form, or must there be a Mission Authorization form for every mission?
- A) You can list all consecutive missions in the same Mission Authorization form. Should you not be able to fit all missions in the same Mission Authorization form, you can use more than one Mission Authorization form. Please note that you must always use a single MOR form for consecutive missions (see section 3.2.).
- Q) I am requesting funding for three different events (a workshop, a conference and fieldwork), which are all consecutive. Do I include them in the same MOR form and Mission Authorization form?
- A) Yes. If your missions are consecutive you must list them all in the same MOR and Mission Authorization form. It is only when you return to Florence in between missions that you must use separate forms (see section 2.3.).
- Q) Should I indicate an estimate of my accommodation expenses (or even the exact amount) on the MOR form? Will it be taken into account for mission funding?
- A) Yes. In order for daily allowances to be allocated, you must provide the booking confirmation of your accommodation - or send an email to the Department confirming that you will be paying for accommodation. When granted, daily allowances will reflect the exact days of the booking, and will only take into account the working days indicated on the MOR form.

5. Contacts

Should you have any questions regarding the above procedures, please contact:

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