RSU Scientific Conference Competition for Doctoral Students

REGULATIONS

1. To promote doctoral students' research activities and their understanding of the impact of their doctoral research, the Department of Doctoral Studies and the Doctoral School of Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter – RSU) organise a doctoral research competition. The competition assesses both the scientific impact of the doctoral research and its impact beyond academia, including on healthcare, professional practice, technology and innovation, society, policy and regulation, the economy, or the environment.
2. The competition is held in two rounds.
   2.1. In the first round, doctoral students shall submit their competition entries electronically by submitting them for participation in the RSU Scientific Conference via the Ex Ordo system by 19 January 2027.
   2.2. In the second round, the judging panel shall assess the entries that have been accepted for presentation at the RSU Scientific Conference 2027 and have received the highest scores.
3. Only entries whose authors and presenters are currently enrolled doctoral students are eligible to participate in the competition.
   3.1. The entry must provide a clear and substantiated description of the impact already generated, or the potential impact, of the doctoral research, demonstrating the link between the research findings, their use, the changes generated or expected, and the resulting impact.
   3.2. The main beneficiaries or target groups must be identified, the contribution of the specific doctoral research to generating the impact must be substantiated, and the reach and significance of the impact must be described.
   3.3. Where impact has already been achieved, it must be substantiated by appropriate evidence. In the case of potential impact, a credible and substantiated pathway to achieving and evaluating that impact must be provided.
   3.4. In the second round, the submitted entries shall be assessed by a judging panel, provided that the doctoral student presents the impact generated, or potentially generated, by their doctoral research, for example, academic, clinical and health-related, technological and innovation-related, economic, societal, policy and regulatory, or environmental impact, describing its reach and significance.
4. Assessment criteria
   4.1. (1) clarity and substantiation of the research impact;
   4.2. (2) beneficiaries, contribution of the research, and evidence;
   4.3. (3) reach and significance of the research impact.
5. Each criterion shall be scored as follows:
   5.1. 2 points – meets the criterion;

5.2. 1 point – partially meets the criterion;
5.3. 0 points – does not meet the criterion.

6. The three highest-ranked participants in the second round of the competition shall receive certificates and cash prizes of EUR 1,500.00, which shall be transferred to the respective participant's bank account.

7. The cash prizes may be used until 31 December 2027. Applications for the use of the prize money must be submitted no later than 1 December 2027.

Vice-Rector for Science A.Kiopa

AGREED
at the meeting of the Council of the Department of Doctoral Studies
25 September 2026
Minutes No 6-DN-18/4/2026

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A DOCTORAL RESEARCH IMPACT DESCRIPTION

1. **Purpose of the description:** The purpose of the doctoral research impact description is **to demonstrate the impact that the research has already generated or could reasonably generate** beyond the actual production of the research outputs. The description should demonstrate not only what has been done or produced through the research, but also how the research findings can contribute to change, for whom these changes are significant, and how the specific research contributes to achieving them.
2. Research impact may occur in different areas. Depending on the specifics of the doctoral research, the types of impact may include, for example:
   2.1. **Scientific impact –** the development of new knowledge, approaches or methods, contributions to further research and the advancement of academic debate;
   2.2. **Clinical and health impact –** improvements in diagnosis, treatment, prevention, patient care or public health;
   2.3. **Technological and innovation impact –** the development and implementation of new technologies, products, methods or other innovations;
   2.4. **Economic impact** – cost reductions, increased efficiency or productivity, commercialisation opportunities, or the creation of economic value;
   2.5. **Policy and regulatory impact** – contributions to the development and improvement of guidelines, recommendations, standards, regulatory frameworks or policies;
   2.6. **Societal impact –** improvements in public knowledge, understanding, behaviour, quality of life or well-being;
   2.7. **Capacity-building and professional impact –** the development of professional competencies, professional practice, research infrastructure or collaborative networks;
   2.8. **Environmental impact –** contributions to improving environmental quality, the sustainable use of resources or other aspects of sustainability.

Doctoral research does not need to encompass all types of impact; the description should highlight the areas of impact that are most relevant to the specific research.

Note: Publications, conference presentations, databases, methods, prototypes and other research outputs do not in themselves constitute impact. Impact is the change that the use of these outputs generates or may generate.

3. **General requirements**
   3.1. The description must be submitted in English.
   3.2. Recommended overall length of the description: 800–1,200 words, excluding references.
   3.3. Unnecessary technical terminology and abbreviations should be avoided.

4. **Mandatory sections of the description**

SECTION	LENGTH	CONTENT/INSTRUCTIONS
Doctoral student		
Title of the doctoral thesis		

SECTION	LENGTH	CONTENT/INSTRUCTIONS
Study programme/field of science		
University/Faculty/structural unit		
Keywords		
Impact title	**Up to 10-15 words**	Provide a concise, clear and engaging title highlighting the impact already generated or potentially generated by the research.
Impact summary	**Up to 150 words**	Briefly describe the main impact already generated or potentially generated by the research. Indicate what change has occurred or could occur, for whom it is or would be significant, and why it matters. Indicate the area or areas in which the research has or could potentially have an impact. The area of impact may be selected on the basis of the examples of impact types provided in Section 1.
Research underpinning the impact	**150-250 words**	Briefly describe the problem or need addressed by the doctoral research. Identify the most significant research findings or insights underpinning the impact. Briefly describe the methodology, but only to the extent necessary to understand the origin of the impact. Explain how the research findings relate to the impact described.
Description of the impact, beneficiaries and contribution of the research	**350-500 words**	Clearly demonstrate the pathway: **research → use of the findings and engagement → change → impact.** Identify the main beneficiaries or target groups and describe the significance of the research findings for them. Describe the involvement of the key stakeholders and how the findings have reached or could reach users. Substantiate the contribution of the specific doctoral research to generating the impact. Where impact has already been achieved, provide supporting evidence; where the impact is potential, provide a credible and substantiated pathway to achieving and evaluating it.

SECTION	LENGTH	CONTENT/INSTRUCTIONS
Reach and significance of the impact	**150-250 words**	Describe the reach of the impact: how many beneficiaries it affects or could affect and at what level it occurs – institutional, regional, national or international. Describe the significance of the impact: how substantial the change is or could be for the beneficiaries and what it changes, for example, in terms of knowledge, understanding, behaviour, practice, policy, healthcare, services, technology or education. Indicate whether the impact is expected in the short, medium or long term and, where possible, specify the relevant timeframe. Describe the reach and significance of the impact in a manner proportionate to the field of science and the scope of the doctoral research.
Research publications and related sources	**Up to 5 key sources**	List the most relevant scientific publications, conference publications or other publicly available research outputs; guidelines, recommendations, reports or methodological materials developed as part of the doctoral research; and other documents or materials directly related to the research.

JUDGING PANEL MEMBER ASSESSMENT FORM

Assessment criterion	2 points	1 point	0 points
1. Articulation	The impact already generated or potentially generated by the research is articulated clearly, specifically and comprehensibly. It is clearly demonstrated **what has changed or could change as a result of the research,** and the description goes beyond merely listing research outputs. The area or	The potential or achieved impact can be identified, but the description is general or insufficiently specific, and research outputs are not fully distinguished from the impact they generate.	The research impact is not clearly articulated; the description focuses primarily on research findings, publications, activities or other outputs without explaining the changes they have generated or could potentially generate.

Assessment criterion	2 points	1 point	0 points
	areas of research impact are identified, for example, academic, clinical and health, technological and innovation, economic, policy and regulatory, societal, capacity-building and professional, or environmental impact.		
2. Engagement & attribution	The beneficiaries, target groups or potential users of the research impact, where applicable, are clearly identified. The link between the specific research and the impact described is substantiated with appropriate evidence. In the case of potential impact, a credible pathway to achieving and evaluating it is provided.	The beneficiaries, target groups or potential users and the contribution of the research to generating the impact are identified only partially or in general terms; the link to the research or the supporting evidence is insufficiently specific.	The beneficiaries or target groups are not clearly identified, or it is not substantiated how the specific research has contributed or could contribute to the impact described. There is no appropriate evidence or realistic plan for obtaining it.
3. Reach & significance	The reach and significance of the impact for the relevant beneficiaries or target groups are clearly described and substantiated, indicating the extent of the impact or potential impact and the significance of the resulting changes. The impact is described in a manner proportionate to the field of science and the scope of the doctoral research.	The reach or significance of the impact is described, but one of these aspects is insufficiently substantiated or the description is too general.	The reach or significance of the impact cannot be assessed; it is unclear how many people, organisations or other beneficiaries are or could be affected or how significant the resulting changes are.