

Projects: requirements, preferences and exclusions

Mandatory Requirements

1. Applicant is an early-career researcher (≤ 10 years post-graduation, including tenure trackers). Applicants who have had a break in their career (e.g. due to maternity/paternity leave, illness, part-time work) are requested to state the length of the break.
2. The project is new, innovative and/or groundbreaking.
3. The project demonstrates clear societal relevance and impact.
4. The project aligns with the **UM Strategic Programme** (multidisciplinarity, innovation, international orientation) ([Strategic Programme 2022–2026 - Maastricht University](#)).
5. The proposal demonstrably contributes to the ambitions of UM, the faculty, school or department. This must be confirmed by a **written statement of support** from the dean or scientific director. The statement of support serves to confirm institutional endorsement and eligibility, not financial contribution.
6. The proposal includes a **transparent, detailed budget**.

Preferential Criteria (non-mandatory, positive weighting)

- Collaboration with societal partners and/or companies in the project design and implementation.
- Involvement in or contribution to **Brightlands campuses** in the region.
- Contribution to one or more of the following strategic themes:
 - healthy society
 - groundbreaking technology and innovation
 - sustainability
 - Europe in a globalising world
- A concrete plan for **valorisation** (e.g. spin-offs, knowledge utilisation).

Exclusions (non-eligible)

- Doctoral programmes (PhDs), including projects alongside or outside regular PhD tracks.
- Salary costs of the applicant/researcher.
- Travel and accommodation costs of the applicant/researcher. (*Guest speakers may be covered.*)
- Financing of basic infrastructure (equipment, workplaces, IT facilities).