Tips for Primus Applicants

The following are informal guidelines for applicants for the Primus grants. They complement the official rules of the competition and reflect common issues observed during the project evaluation, as well as priorities of the evaluation committees.

Project Proposal

Novelty and strategic fit
- A core objective of the Primus programme is to **develop a new research topic** at Charles University. The novelty of the project must be clearly explained in the application, especially in cases where the applicant is already employed at CUNI. It must be evident that the project represents a **new line of research.**
- At the same time, applicants must explain the **strategic fit with the host faculty/institute**.

Clarity and accessibility
- The proposal is relatively short and **will be also evaluated by non-specialists**. (e.g., a sociology project may be reviewed by an economist, or a mathematics project by a computer scientist). Therefore: The **core research ideas must be understandable to an educated non-expert**. At least the basic ideas should be explained in a very clear and accessible way.
  In summary, clearly communicate:
    o the research problem,
    o why it matters,
    o what is new.

Scientific content and feasibility
> The proposal must strike a balance between **ambition and realism**. The proposal should provide a sufficient amount of **technical detail**. In particular, it should have clear, explicit **goals** that are ambitious, but realistic, and it should give some concrete ideas on the **methodology**, on how the goals will be achieved.

Concurrent or previous grants
If the applicant currently holds or previously held a junior grant and/or participates in another Primus project, they must clearly explain:
- the **relationship between the projects,**
- the **distinctiveness and novelty** of the proposed Primus project.

Host institution commitment
- The host faculty (or institute) must **agree to host the project**. Approval is **not automatic.**

- This agreement must be **arranged in advance by the applicant.** Potential applicants should **contact the head of the host institution as early as possible.**

Team composition and roles

The proposal should:
- Clearly define the **roles and responsibilities** of each team member.
- Explain **why each role is necessary.**
- Optionally name key team members (if known), but this is not required.
- Include **student team members** where appropriate (this is viewed positively), with clearly defined roles.

Potential risks:
- Inclusion of **senior faculty from the host institute.**
- Inclusion of the **applicant's former PhD supervisor.**

If such individuals are included their involvement must be **strictly justified** and their role should be **clearly limited**

In most cases, it is preferable to include senior researchers at most as **informal mentors or advisors.**

Budget and workload

The proposal must include:
- A **clear and justified budget** (for all years of the project),
- **Workload allocation** across team members.

An important change for the 2026 call is that applicants with recent research experience abroad (i.e., those who have spent at least 24 months abroad within the past 3 years) may receive 90% of the requested funding from the university (i.e., the cofinancing by their host institution would be only 10%).

Applicant Profile

The Primus programme is designed for **excellent, independent early-career researchers**. The applicant's track record is a **major evaluation criterion**.

Of particular importance are **high quality publications** which are evaluated relative to career stage and **international experience** at high-quality institutions.

Applicants must demonstrate:
- the ability to **define and lead their own research agenda and team**
- independence from former supervisors and senior collaborators

Relevant experience may include:
- previous student supervision or co-supervision,
- teaching, popularization or other leadership activities,
- previous participation in research projects.

Career breaks and special circumstances

If the applicant's career progression has been affected by:

- parental leave,
- health issues,
- other objective circumstances,

these should be **clearly explained in the application**.

We strongly encourage such applicants (e.g., after parental leave) to apply!

CV format

The applicant's CV must be prepared using the **official ERC CV template**.

Final Advice

Successful applications typically:

- present a **clear, original research vision,**
- demonstrate **independence and leadership potential,**
- show **strong alignment between applicant, project, and host institution,**
- are **well-structured, concise, and easy to understand.**

Only the **required documents** (CV and list of publications) are considered in the evaluation. Additional attachments are **not evaluated.** Exceptions are **extremely rare** and must be **strongly justified.**

Applicants are encouraged to:

- start preparation early,
- seek feedback from colleagues and the head of the host institute,
- ensure clarity for both experts and non-experts.