

Aspasia
Round 2010



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Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

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1 Introduction

Aspasia is designed to alleviate the under-representation of women in the upper echelons of academia.

Aspasia is linked to the NWO's Innovational Research Incentives Scheme (*Vernieuwingsimpuls*). Female participation in the mainstream competition for individual grants like the Vidi and Vici awards under the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme was relatively low and it was thought extremely important to encourage greater participation. As an incentive, it was decided in 2005 to award premiums to universities which promoted female recipients of Vidi and Vici grants to senior lecturer or professorial positions within one year of the award of the relevant grant.

The programme has recently been evaluated and found to be successful. Even so, the rate of increase in female occupancy of senior lecturer and professorial posts is still too low. Starting in 2010, therefore, NWO intends to increase the impact of Aspasia by extending the programme to include female Vidi and Vici applicants who were selected for interview and whose applications the committee judged at that point to be worthy of grant, but who were not awarded grants by the NWO Governing Board because of resource constraints. In addition, NWO is introducing a separate scheme for Vici applicants attached to NWO or KNAW institutes. This will also start in 2010.

2 Aim

The aim of Aspasia is to encourage the promotion of female academics to senior lecturer (or professorial) level.

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has made M€ 4 available for the 2010 round: enough for up to 40 premiums. If suitable candidates outnumber the premiums available, the subsidies may be shared out between various fields of study and limited to those candidates with highest priority. The order of priority will be decided by the Governing Board of NWO.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Aspasia is linked to NWO's competitive Vidi and Vici grant schemes. To qualify as an Aspasia candidate, a female applicant for a Vidi or Vici grant must either have been awarded such a grant, or have had her application judged worthy of grant following the interview procedure but been unsuccessful in obtaining one because of resource constraints: Executive Boards that promote such applicants to senior lecturer or professor within a year of the Vidi or Vici grant award decision may, subject to certain conditions, qualify for a premium.

3.2 What can be applied for

The premium available for the promotion of each grant recipient is € 100,000. The premium offered for the promotion of a grant-worthy but unsuccessful candidate is € 200,000. This means that the latter group receive no grant under the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme but are awarded a larger subsidy under Aspasia.

The Aspasia premium may be used in a number of alternative ways. A condition of grant is that the Board must use at least € 50,000 of the premium to fund more generic diversity policy measures by the university or faculty to increase the upward movement of female staff within the institution.

Diversity policy

The use of the premium for diversity policy measures must be linked to the direct promotion of women to higher posts in academia or to the expansion of their opportunities to conduct research (including relief from teaching duties in order to undertake research). The Executive Board can opt to use the Aspasia premium for either faculty or university purposes, or for a combination of the two.

Examples of diversity policy

Examples of more generic measures to encourage the upward movement of female academic staff include:

- The transfer of the premium by the Executive Board to the faculty that has promoted the female Vidi or Vici grant recipient or candidate. The money can then be spent at faculty level to:
 - Temporarily release female academics from teaching duties to enable them to prepare Veni, Vidi or Vici applications
 - Temporarily release female academics from teaching duties to enable them to concentrate entirely on their research (in the Netherlands or elsewhere) and/or to add to their publications list and so to improve their career prospects within academia
 - Provide replacement subsidies (including subsidies to cover replacement teaching costs) for female academics returning from a period of care or other such leave
 - Fund overlapping appointments so that female academics can be positioned in advance to fill lecturer, senior lecturer or professorial posts which are soon to fall vacant
 - Fund extra postdoctoral researchers to assist new female professors
- Provide mentoring and coaching arrangements for female academic staff
- The establishment by the Executive Board of a university fund to subsidise the promotion of women from lecturer to senior lecturer, or from senior lecturer to professor.

Extra money for the candidate's research

The Executive Board can use the remainder of the premium (€ 50,000 in the case of grant recipients and € 150,000 in the case of grant-worthy but unsuccessful Vidi or Vici applicants) to benefit the candidate herself, reward her for her success and supplement the Vidi/Vici grant (if any). The addition to her budget will give the candidate scope to expand her research (for example, by appointing an extra post-doc or research assistant, by temporarily suspending her teaching activities and/or by undertaking a period of research at a university outside the Netherlands) and this may encourage other female academics to apply for Vidi or Vici grants.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

Following the Vidi and Vici award decisions, NWO contacts some or all of the recipients and grant-worthy but unsuccessful applicants. A timetable for this procedure is below (see 4.1). Vidi applicants who are already senior lecturers and Vici applicants who already hold professorships will not be contacted. If the candidate agrees, NWO will propose to her Executive Board that she should be promoted under the Aspasia scheme.

3.4 Drawing up an application

It is not possible to apply for Aspasia. The programme is linked to NWO's Vidi and Vici grant schemes. See 3.1.

3.5 Specific conditions

Aspasia is linked to the 2010 round of the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme and is intended exclusively to encourage the promotion of female Vidi applicants who were not yet senior lecturers on 11 February 2010 (the deadline for the Vidi round) and female Vici applicants who were not yet professors on 30 March 2010 (the deadline for the Vici round).

Vidi round 2010

- To qualify for an Aspasia premium, a candidate must be promoted to senior lecturer within one year of the Vidi award decision (i.e. by 1 December 2011). The promotion must not be on a temporary basis and must be for at least the same number of hours as the appointment held by the candidate at the time when she submitted her Vidi application. The Executive Board must submit to NWO a contract showing that the candidate has been promoted.
- For candidates not yet appointed at university lecturer level on 11 February 2010, there is an exceptional provision: an Aspasia premium may be awarded if the woman concerned is appointed at university lecturer level (with tenure) within six months of the Vidi award decision (i.e. by 1 June 2011) and promoted to senior lecturer (with tenure) within three years of the Vidi award decision. In this case, the Aspasia premium will be awarded in tranches: around a third (€ 35,000/€ 70,000, depending on the size of the premium) after appointment at university lecturer level and around two thirds (€ 65,000/€ 130,000) after promotion to senior lecturer.

Vici round 2010

- To qualify for an Aspasia premium, a candidate must be promoted to professor within one year of the Vici award decision (i.e. by 1 February 2012). The promotion must not be on a temporary basis and must be for at least the same

number of hours as the appointment held by the candidate at the time when she submitted her Vici application.

- For candidates not yet appointed at university lecturer level on 30 March 2010, there is an exceptional provision: an Aspasia premium may be awarded if the woman concerned is appointed at senior university lecturer level (with tenure) within six months of the Vici award decision (i.e. by 1 August 2011) and promoted to professor (with tenure) within three years of the Vici award decision. In this case, the Aspasia premium will be awarded in tranches: around a third (€ 35,000/€ 70,000, depending on the size of the premium) after appointment at senior university lecturer level and around two thirds (€ 65,000/€ 130,000) after promotion to professor.
- For Vici grant recipients or grant-worthy but unsuccessful applicants attached to KNAW or NWO institutes, there are separate arrangements: if the researcher wishes to remain attached to an institute, she can qualify for an Aspasia premium by assuming a part-time post as professor at a university. The appointment must be for at least 0.2 FTE and must not be on a temporary basis. The premium is then awarded to the university concerned. Depending on what is agreed between the university and the institute, the university's Executive Board can decide to cede all or part of the premium to the institute. The remaining conditions regarding the use of the funds are the same as for all other Aspasia premiums: € 50,000 for the institution's generic promotion policies and the remainder to be used either for that purpose or for the research budget of the female academic concerned.

3.6 Submitting an application

It is not possible to apply for Aspasia. The programme is linked to NWO's competitive Vidi and Vici grant schemes. See 3.1.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

Following the Vidi and Vici award decisions, NWO contacts some or all of the candidates eligible for Aspasia premiums. If the candidate wishes to take advantage of the Aspasia scheme to obtain promotion, NWO then contacts the relevant Executive Board. NWO awards the premium once it has received a contract showing that the candidate has been promoted and a covering letter from the Executive Board explaining how it intends to use the money.

Timetable

The timetable for the 2010 round is as follows:

- November 2010
Results of current Vidi round; NWO sends letters to eligible Vidi candidates
- January 2011
NWO asks Executive Boards to promote Vidi candidates
- January 2011
Results of current Vici round; NWO sends letters to eligible Vici candidates
- March 2011
NWO asks Executive Boards to promote Vici candidates
- November 2012 (at latest)
Executive Boards report promotion of Vidi candidates to NWO
- January 2012 (at latest)
Executive Boards report promotion of Vici candidates to NWO

Reporting arrangements

Research funding

In the case of a premium awarded to a Vidi or Vici grant recipient

If the Executive Board decides that a proportion of the Aspasia premium should benefit the grant recipient herself (see 3.2), NWO will pay that part of the premium directly to her (in addition to the earlier Vidi or Vici grant). Extra salary costs resulting from the promotion can be charged to this part of the premium. The grant recipient should then account (at the end of the project) for the use of the money via the usual financial reporting arrangements for the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme.

In the case of a premium awarded to a grant-worthy but unsuccessful Vidi or Vici applicant

If the Executive Board decides that a proportion of the Aspasia premium should benefit the candidate herself (see 3.2), NWO will pay that part of the premium directly to her. The candidate concerned must submit a budget with a brief written explanation showing how the resources will be used to fund her research. There is a five-year deadline for the use of the money. At the end of that period, the candidate must submit final accounts, showing that the resources have been used in accordance with the budget.

Diversity policy

The proportion of premium to be used for more generic activities (see 3.2) is paid by NWO to the Executive Board and the Executive Board is accountable to NWO for the use made of the money: in order to receive the premium, the Board must present an expenditure plan (budget plus brief written explanation) for NWO's approval; NWO would like to receive this expenditure plan within a year of the relevant Vidi or Vici award decision. Once the funds are exhausted, the institution must present a

final report and final accounts. NWO would like to receive these as soon as possible after the exhaustion of the funds, but at any rate within five years of the relevant Vidi or Vici award decision.

4.2 Criteria

There are no selection criteria for Aspasia. Provided that a promotion satisfies the specific conditions of grant (see 3.5), NWO will invariably award the premium.

5 Other information

5.1 Contact with NWO

Information about the Aspasia programme can be found on the NWO website. Please consult the website before contacting NWO. Any further questions about the programme can be addressed to

- Mirjam Rigterink or Hanneke Dekker
- tel. +31 (0)70 349 40 11, aspasia@nwo.nl.

NWO/BOO Aspasia programme
P.O. Box 93138, 2509 AC The Hague
Website www.nwo.nl/aspasia

5.2 Who was Aspasia?

Aspasia was a Greek philosopher who lived between 470 and 410 BC. She was born in Miletus, in Ionia. Her father was an enlightened man who gave his daughter a good education. Still a young woman, she moved to Athens where, as a non-citizen, she was classed as a 'hetaera'. Hetaerae were generally educated and independent women. According to various sources (including Plato and Plutarch), Aspasia gave lessons in rhetoric which were attended by Socrates.