



# Young Cell Scheme (Rounds XIII-XIV-XV)

## EU Scholarship Program for Kosovo

### Rules of Procedure Round XIV





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## I) Objectives and content of the Scheme

### A) YCS Objectives and principles

The main objective of Young Cell Scheme (YCS) program is to contribute to build and enforce a professional, accountable, merit-based, and apolitical Civil Service at all levels in Kosovo. YCS supports Kosovo public administration through this specific scholarship program that aims at improving the professional capacity of civil servants to better service Kosovo citizens and to meet the challenges and the obligations arising from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA).

The specific purpose of Young Cell Scheme – Round XIV call for application is to support the Government of Kosovo (GoK) in generating a core group of civil servants in the fields identified as weak areas for the country. This Action aims to strengthen the Kosovar public administration by means of ensuring that the administrative gaps in the GoK are addressed by offering specialised higher education opportunities to young Kosovo citizens in EU countries in an inclusive approach. Awarded grantees, before and after the completion of their studies in EU universities, will be integrated within the governmental structures, based on their educational background, and with an aim to build a modern system of public administration that meets the demands of EU integration processes in general and of SAA in particular. At the same time, the Action assistance will contribute to poverty reduction through the enhancement of economic opportunities for the Kosovo population, including the most marginalized groups by promoting inter alia minority recruitment and representation in the civil service, the central and local administrations, and meeting the specific needs of all communities, with a specific focus on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian groups.

The specific objectives of the Action will be met by an efficient, effective, transparent, non-politicised, and fair implementation of the YCS Rounds, conducted in the spirit of positive discrimination towards members of minority communities, women, and candidates with disabilities.

The YCS under Round XIV will select 30 Kosovo citizens who, before and after finishing their Master studies in EU universities, will be employed (or re-employed in case they are already employed in the civil service) as civil servants in the public administration and will be determined to drive and implement reforms in the public administration, in particular those required for the SAA implementation. 25 grantees will be awarded with one-year scholarships including: tuition fees, applications costs, visa, health insurance, one return travel, 4 installments for living allowances, while 5 grantees will be awarded with two-years' scholarships including: tuition fees, applications costs, visa, health insurance, one return travel at the end of their studies, 8 installments for living allowances.



Clarifications: 1) The selection of grantees for two years course will be decided on case by case basis by the Scholarship Steering Committee. 2) Courses that include multiple destinations of studies, e.g. starting the course in Berlin for a semester, another semester in Rome and a third semester in Heraklion, the programme will cover multiple tickets to destination countries.

The only differences between scholarships reserved for civil servants and those for general public are related to:

- a) the tools used during the outreach campaign (the project will disseminate information about YCS Round XIV – XV selections among civil servants using governmental social media, as well as the internal email system provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and organizing a dedicated open day in GoK premises).
- b) civil servants, once awarded with a scholarship will not be required to attend an internship as other grantees, but they will continue to work in their old position until the planned departure for their master studies abroad;

On the other hand, Civil servants awarded with a scholarship will be obliged, as other non-civil servant grantees to attend all trainings required and organized by the YCS project and experts prior to departure (i.e. English, French if needed, etc.).

So, the overall objective of the Young Cell Scheme in Kosovo is to improve the professional capacity of the civil service to better serve Kosovo citizens and meet the obligations arising from the SAA. This general goal will be pursued through the completion of advanced academic training and education of, up to 35 years old, graduated or under-graduated but in their last year in a university in Kosovo students and civil servants, and their subsequent (re)integration into the Public Service for a minimum period of 3 consecutive years. The Action's specific objective is as follows: young women, men and minorities are selected, study, and graduate from a master's program in the EU and then complete three years of work in the Kosovo Civil Service.

The scheme's Program includes:

- a) Active and compulsory participation to all language (or other) training activities that will be provided for the selected grantees by the YCS project and experts prior to their departure.
- b) Up to 4 months internship within Kosovo's Public Administration or other agreed bodies (just for non-civil servants, as stated above civil servants' grantees will simply continue to work in their old position prior to their departure), to be completed in the period between May 2024 to August 2024; GoK shall be responsible to recruit grantees within (ten days) following the selection of the candidates and share the internship implementation decision with the YCS



team, to monitor internship payment process. Internships will be paid on monthly basis, providing the public institutions' confirmation of internship completion of the specific month.

- c) One or two-years post-graduate studies in Universities of any EU Member State in one of the sectors previously required by and agreed with Kosovo Public Administration.

Once the Program has been completed, the grantees have the obligation to start working or continue working (if he/she was already a civil servant prior the departure) in the Kosovo Public Administration for a minimum period of three consecutive years, thus using the expertise and education acquired during the completion of their master studies abroad.

In addition to the work at the central level, the grantees have the possibility of working for local governments, municipalities and all public institutions and bodies. Such obligation will be enshrined in the scholarship contract that grantees will sign prior to their departure for studies abroad. The GoK shall employ the graduated YCS student through a regular employment contract as a civil servant upon his/her notification of completion of studies, in the terms and manners as specified in RIV scholarship agreement, for a period of at least three (3) consecutive calendar years at the level of "Professional 1" in compliance with the applicable law on civil service in Kosovo. If the graduated YCS student is already a civil servant once he/she finishes his/her studies, he/she will be reintegrated in his/her old position with at least the same category as before but will also have the right to employ in the Civil Service at the level of "Professional 1" if the previous position is lower.

Prior to the departure of the selected candidates, they will be positioned in a public institution to complete an internship for a period of up to 4 months. The internship should be in line with his/her sector and, if possible, in line with the program of his/her master's degree, also taking into account where the professional expertise of the graduated YCS student may be needed. Upon completion of his/her studies, the Graduated YCS student will be integrated in a public institution (at central or local level, including municipal authorities) for a position following the same rules/provisions as the ones prior to their departure (with his/her sector and, if possible, in line with the program of his/her master's degree and taking into account where relevant his/her professional expertise.)

The European Union Office in Kosovo will be following closely the employment of grantees in the Kosovo Civil Service, which will be reported on by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Public Administration of Kosovo retains the right to employ the student within the 16 months following the completion of his/her program. During this period of time, however, the non-civil servant grantee will be entitled to take up employment also outside the Civil Service (i.e. in private sector) in case employment is not offered within the first 4 months after the completion of his/her studies. On the other hand, GoK will reintegrate immediately the civil servant grantee in his/her old position upon his/her return from studies abroad.



The Project will make available to grantees details and specifications of the contractual relations with the Public Administration not later than two weeks after the completion of the selection procedure for Round XIV and in any case prior to the signature by the Grantees of the YCS Declaration of Understanding (please see next paragraph).

Upon successfully completing the selection process, grantees will be required to sign a Declaration of Understanding with the YCS project, encompassing the obligations outlined in the current Rules of Procedure. Additionally, upon issuance of a student visa (if required by the destination country), grantees will proceed to sign their scholarship agreement, delineating their rights and responsibilities throughout the scholarship duration. The Declaration of Understanding will also define specific disciplinary procedures applicable to grantees in the period leading up to their departure. Grantees failing to adhere to all obligations specified in the current rules may face disciplinary consequences<sup>1</sup>, such as the scholarship may be revoked in cases of serious non-compliance following a decision made by the Project Steering Committee (representatives from the European Union Office in Kosovo, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation and project Implementing Partner).

When the scholarship contract is signed by all parties the grantee will receive the first installment of living expenses plus the outgoing travel cost (only use of public transportation allowed). The tuition fees will then be paid straight to the destination university according to the installment defined by it.

Regarding the above-mentioned payments, the grantee must submit:

- (a) For travel costs grantees must supply ticket purchase invoice, (payment or credit card charging) transaction receipt and boarding cards (scanned or web check in);
- (b) For all other costs must supply receipt/invoices and (in case of credit card payment) the transaction receipt.

To ensure the full success of the Round XIV, the Implementing partner will inform regularly the GoK and EU Office in Kosovo on the developments, so they will follow closely all the phases of the scholarship project:

- a) The regular evaluation and assessment of grantees' progress and compliance with their obligations during the period prior to the departure abroad;

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<sup>1</sup> I understand that in case I do not respect the Rules of Procedure and the letter and spirit of this Declaration of Understanding it is the duty of the YCS Secretariat to report me to the Scholarship's Stakeholders for a disciplinary procedure that can range from financial penalties on my future living allowances to the withdraw of the Scholarship itself.



- b) The quality and accuracy of training delivered to awarded grantees;
- c) The identification and assessment of non-civil servants grantees' strengths and weaknesses when defining future positions in Kosovo Public Administration;
- d) The position held by civil servants' grantees in Kosovo Public Administration and the possibility to raise their employment grade after the completion of studies;
- e) The selection process will prioritize the needs-based selection of young graduates and professionals. Affirmative measures, including positive discrimination of 5%, will be implemented to ensure opportunities for minorities, particularly Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian graduates, as well as women and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, efforts will be made to mobilize suitable and motivated civil servants in the selection process.
- f) The Selection Process will abide to 3 fundamental principles: transparency, fairness, and non-discrimination.

**Transparency** is to be understood by the fact that each stage of the selection process will be publicly advertised at the same time for all applicants, and the same information will be provided to everybody. Moreover, transparency will be ensured through the communication campaign to publicize scholarships, continuous online publication of all relevant documentation, including of selection decisions, as well as through extensive use of email with both applicants and potential applicants registering on the Scholarships' website. Transparency will also be achieved via information posted on social media and by reinforcing the opportunity given to students to review their personal files at the end of selections. The list of candidates and their ranking will also be published using the protocol number of their application on [www.ycskosovo.org](http://www.ycskosovo.org) and <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/>. Thus, all applicants, including those not short-listed or selected for the further stages, will be able to witness in detail the development of each stage of the selection procedure. Upon their requests, applicants will be allowed to view their own exam papers, and, where applicable, the outcome of their interviews after the results have been made public. The final minutes of the interviews stage will also be published on the project's official website <http://www.ycskosovo.org>.

**Fairness** is to be understood by the fact that any candidate attempting in any way or form to influence or mislead the selection process in his/her favor will be disqualified and immediately removed from the selection (i.e. including selected reserves, who will try to influence in a direct or indirect manner taken decisions). Attempts in this sense include, though not exclusively, phone calls, emails or any other form of direct contact with the YCS project and its experts or with other individuals officially involved in the selection process in order to try to influence the outcome of the selections (i.e. invigilators during written exams, experts during interviews or the YCS team). Any candidate attempting to copy or use non-allowed materials during the written exams will be asked to leave and





will be immediately removed from the selection (a detailed set of rules governing written exams will be prepared in due course by the project and presented to all candidates admitted sitting written tests). Written exams will be code-numbered, to ensure anonymity of applicants, and they will be corrected using optical marker reading technology by an independent professional service of an EU Member State with a proven track record of similar activities for public and private selections in the recent past. Candidates will not be allowed to write their names on any exam paper or mark them in any way that may lead to the identification of the candidate, subject to their exclusion from the selection. Written exam papers will be kept absolutely confidential and secured in a safe place until the day of the exams and accessible only to the YCS project team (nor GOK neither EUO representatives will be allowed to get access to these forms). The reading material will be published in advance of the exams in order for the candidates to get prepared for the written exams. Any threats of any form or attempt to influence decision moved directly or indirectly to the YCS project team or to any of the individuals involved in the selection process (in any stage of it: pre-selection, written exams, interviews, final ranking) will also be reported immediately to the competent authorities, where and if such threats represent a criminal offence. In addition, any direct or indirect (i.e. through third persons not directly involved in the selection process) attempt to influence the decisions and the independence of YCS project team, interview panel or other professionals and experts involved in the selection procedure will cause the immediate disqualification of the candidate. This includes any kind of political influence as well and/or attempt to use third parties to influence final decisions about awarded grantees. Any attempt of political interference during all stages of the selection procedure will be reported immediately to GoK, EUO and other competent authorities.

**Non-discrimination** - a targeted outreach campaign specifically aims to attract minorities, with a particular emphasis on Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian groups. In cases where candidates are equally qualified (i.e., achieving the same final score), preference will be given to women, members of minorities, and candidates with disabilities. This prioritization is intended to ensure a balanced outcome in the competition. Individuals with disabilities are kindly requested to communicate their needs on the Scholarship Application Form, enabling the YCS project team to take necessary measures to facilitate access to exam premises and ensure equal conditions, thereby enhancing their chances of success in the selections.

## B) Sectors of the Scholarship and number of scholarships available

Under Round XIV of the YCS 30 scholarships will be awarded for specialization in different sectors which correspond with the groups of specialization in the Regulation (GRK) No. 10/2022 on the Classification of Jobs in Civil Service (<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=68651>). The aim





is to ensure that the applicants will apply to pursue their postgraduate studies in order to become specialized in their field but at the same time will choose to apply for a sector where they intend to work, since the division of sectors serves as a basis for allocating positions for future civil servants. The sectors and the number of scholarships available have been defined by the Government of Kosovo, and they are the following:

- **European integration** – 10 scholarships corresponding with the group 14 “Social Science Specialists” which will be employed in the departments responsible for European integration in the Office of the Prime Minister and line ministries;
- **Law** – 8 scholarships corresponding with the group 1 “Legal Specialists” which will be employed in the legal departments;
- **Public administration and human resources** – 6 scholarships corresponding with the group 7 “Human Resources Specialists”, which will be employed in the Ministry responsible for public administration (Ministry of Internal Affairs); and
- **Diplomacy** – 6 scholarships corresponding with the group 15 “Political Science Specialists”, which will be employed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora.

This round is organised as a separate competition within each sector (i.e. each student will compete with other applicants only within the sector he applied for). Therefore, there will be separate rankings (one for each sector) and the scores for written exams and interviews will be considered for each sector separately. Nevertheless, these Rules of Procedure define a minimum threshold for English written test to be invited to sit the interviews for all sectors.

Thus, the final distribution of grantees between the four sectors will depend on the number of candidates and on their capacity to pass the tests and the English language threshold. If this English threshold (65%) will not be reached and/or if not enough suitable candidates will be available under each sector after the pre-selection phase, according to the number of received applications, the project reserves the right to redistribute the available scholarships between other sectors which have more candidates.

The precise definition of each sector, as well as the prerequisite degrees for applying for a specific sector, are detailed in Annex I to these Rules. Applicants are required to carefully read and understand Annex I before submitting their application in order to avoid disappointment at a later stage. Applicants without the specified academic background or an equivalent professional experience (where applicable and as specified in Annex I) for the sector they intend to compete in, will be rejected during the pre-selection stage (please see below, II.2.a, Pre-selection of applications).



Specialization of grantees in the above sectors will be achieved both in his/her Master Program and in his/her final Master paper or dissertation. This engagement will be included in the Scholarship agreement and will become legally binding upon grantees at the moment of signing the contract. That means the grantees will also have to share and to agree with the YCS Scholarship Program (and its stakeholders) the topic of their Master paper (final paper/thesis/final project).

Applicants must indicate in their YCS Application Form the sector they intend to apply for and make sure that sub-sectors they are interested to apply are listed in Annex I, if they are awarded with a scholarship. No changes of sector are allowed, and no other sub-sectors are possible unless they are listed in Annex I to these Rules. Applicants who do not indicate in the Application form their sector of choice will immediately be rejected at the Pre-selection stage.



## Part for Selected Applicants

### C) Choice of EU Universities

Grantees have in principle the opportunity to apply to master programs at their preferred EU universities as long as their choice is in line with available financial resources, sectors, eligible sub-sectors and requirements made by GoK. To support the candidates in their choices, the YCS project team with the Action Senior Expert will share a list of universities that offer relevant MA programs based on the relevance, the cost of the program and the quality of education provided.

Each applicant must apply at min. 2, max. 3 programmes in, at least, two different EU countries and the final decision for their destination is taken only by the EUO and the GoK, under the advice of the YCS project team, based on available budget, the professional orientation test results of the students and quality of received offers.

Only if no application out of the initial three is successful, each grantee will be allowed to present one more application. In this manner it will be avoided the unlikable practice of the application to one additional country, based on grantees personal preferences rather than on academic and scientific considerations.

In case of conflict with the preferences given by the grantees, it is compulsory to the study programmes that are advised by the YCS stakeholders. Grantees will be supported in the application process for advised Universities by the Action Senior Expert and the YCS project team, that will follow and advice each grantee during his application. The final decisions for each destination university will be taken by GoK and EUO jointly during a dedicated Project Steering Committee meeting.

Grantees enrolled in 12 months MA programs will be entitled to receive living allowances for the duration of 12 months. The amount will be determined based on the cost of living in the EU country where the grantee is pursuing their studies and the associated MA program fees. The living costs for a specific EU country will have to be given to the stakeholders by the YCS Project team, in order to be able to decide on the scholarship. For 24 months MA programs, grantees will receive living allowances for the entire duration of the program, covering 24 months. Grantees' final destination will be decided only by the EUO and the GoK upon advice from the Action Senior Expert and the YCS project team and the Professionals Orientation advise, following the criteria below (in order of importance for consideration):

- a) The Master Programs considered are in line with both contents of specialization sectors and sub-sectors – as defined in Annex I of these Rules - and grantees academic background;
- b) The academic value of the programs and the universities;



c) The overall financial sustainability of the YCS Scholarship program;

In order to enforce the application of the principles of equal treatment, fairness and transparency, grantees who try to influence or lobby for the program of their preference in any way or manner, including external attempts of political or other nature made by third parties, will be subject to a disciplinary procedure that may lead to the withdrawal of the scholarship.

On the other hand, applications made to universities before the end of Round XIV selection process are in general not taken into account. However, they might be considered only where and if they respect the definitions of sectors and sub-sectors in Annex I and if they are approved by the stakeholders. Potential applicants, after reading Annex I to these Rules, and where they have a specific university and program in mind that fulfil the definition of their sector, are also invited to apply to such universities, as soon as possible, if the applications deadline would expire before the end of the selection process (this can be the case for some Nordic, Dutch, German and French universities). Applicants must note, however, that no reimbursement can be offered for costs engaged in applications to universities prior to the award of the YCS Scholarship.

An indicative list of universities will be provided to the successful candidates.



## II) Selection Schedule, Stages and Rules of Procedure

### 1. Schedule and Deadline for Application

- a) **6 April (Saturday) – 30 April 2024 (Tuesday):** Opening of the call for applications for Round XIV published on most important national newspapers, selected news web-portals, radios, social media and on the official YCS website <https://yckosovo.org> (as well as on <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net> and [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo_en)) and further disseminated via partner agencies.

Application package will be received by email upon personal registration at the official YCS website <https://yckosovo.org>

**30 April 2024 (Tuesday) @ 17h00:** Deadline for the receipt of complete applications. Application documents in PDF format must be submitted online in compressed folder through (Zip Folder) the scholarship web site <https://yckosovo.org> or in case of technical difficulties, applications can be submitted in hard copies in a closed envelope in the office address below, no later than 17h00 on Tuesday, 30 April 2024. Applicants are advised not to wait until the last minute to submit their application while in case of any technical difficulties they should contact the office:

#### **Young Cell Scheme Round XIV Applications**

**Str. Behije Dashi, No.14, 6<sup>th</sup> floor**

**Aktash, Prishtina 10000 Kosovo**

**Tel. +38349444357**

- b) **29-30 April (Monday-Tuesday) and 2 May 2024 (Thursday):** pre-selection of applications/administrative check of the eligibility criteria of received applications and invitation to written exams for those that passed the eligibility check;
- c) **3 May 2024 (Friday):** The applicants who passed the pre-selection phase are invited to the written exams by email. Lists of applicants will be published online on the scholarship website <https://yckosovo.org> and on <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net>



- d) **11-12 May 2024 (Saturday and Sunday):** The pre-selected candidates will take written exams. They will be divided in two groups according to alphabetical order, the first group will take written exams on 11 May 2024 and the other group of candidates on 12 May 2024.
- e) **15 May 2024 (Wednesday):** Publication online of the results of written exams and invitation to the interviews for up to 60 candidates (who will be divided in the 4 different sectors as explained below), on the scholarship website <https://ycskosovo.org> and on GOK website <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net>  
  
The Project Steering Committee retains the right to lower or higher the overall number of applicants invited to sit interviews **according to the overall results of written tests (60 candidates).**
- f) **16 – 20 May 2024 (Thursday to Monday):** Interviews made by a panel constituted by 5 EU Academics.
- g) **21 May 2024 (Tuesday):** Publication of the final ranking of RXIV selection procedure divided per sector and communication of the results to the selected YCS Round XIV grantees on the scholarship website <https://ycskosovo.org> and on GOK website <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net>

## 2. Selection Stages and Rules of Procedures

The selection will be carried out in 3 stages:

- a) Pre-Selection of applications
  - b) Written exams (English Language Knowledge Test, EU General Knowledge Test and Verbal & Numerical Reasoning Test)
  - c) Interviews
- a) Pre-selection of applications (Eligibility of Applicants and Applications)

The initial selection of applications is to ensure that applicants are eligible for the scholarship and that their applications are complete in all parts. A panel composed by the YCS project team (2 members), GoK (1 member) and EUO (1 member) will select the eligible candidates to be invited to the written exams. **Only the applicants that fulfill the relevant criteria will be invited for the written exams.**



Candidates are pre-selected based on the eligibility criteria, indicated below and in the Call for application. The applications from non-eligible candidates and/or incomplete applications will be rejected (NB: this may also include applications that have not been signed by the applicant).

**Eligible applicants are:**

- a) Kosovo's citizens with a valid Kosovo passport or ID card issued by Kosovo. In the absence of ID card or passport during application phase, birth certificate with citizenship certificate may be accepted.
- b) University graduates holding a bachelor's degree in one of the areas of study pertaining to the sectors (please refer to Annex I to these Rules).
- c) Fluent in English and Albanian or Serbian.
- d) Available to travel and to move abroad from August 2024 to October 2024, and to undergo intensive English language training from the second half of March? 2024 onwards.
- e) Born on 1 January 1989 or later.

NB: previous YCS grantees who have benefited from funding and already attended a Master program abroad are not eligible to re-apply to the scheme, as well as candidates who already obtained a master's degree in EU countries or already benefited from similar scholarships awarded by other donors in Kosovo.

**Complete applications are composed of:**

- a) YCS Round XIV Application Form, in English, completed and signed, with a valid email address. Communication with applicants will be conducted only and exclusively through email;
- b) Europass CV, in English (the project will provide all applicants with an updated Europass CV template and related instructions within the application package they will receive by email);
- c) Letter of Motivation, in English, signed and dated;
- d) Copies of valid Kosovo ID and/or passport or original proof of birth in Kosovo (or certified copies of such proofs).

NB: originals or certified copies of both birth certificate and residence certificate must be enclosed with the application where any form of Kosovo ID is not available;

- e) Copy of University degree of at least 180 ECTS plus Original Transcripts of exams (signed and stamped by the University). **BOTH** documents **MUST** be enclosed with the application





form. We draw the attention of the applicants that Transcripts **MUST** be in original, signed and stamped by the University. Undergraduate applicants **MUST** enclose with their application original transcripts (or a similar certificate) from current academic year (i.e., 2024 academic year) with the list of exams already passed and those still to pass plus a signed statement by the applicant with the indication of the date by when the applicant expects to complete the degree (in any case not later than 31 July 2024 as specified above). In case original transcripts cannot be enclosed with the application, it is possible to enclose a certified copy of transcripts (see paragraph below). NB: Undergraduate applicants must read and fully understand the paragraph "Undergraduate applicants" above in these rules of procedures to avoid mistakes and disappointment at a later stage.

NB: Certified copies of documents are those copies whose conformity to the original document has been notarized by a notary.

NB: Applicants who at the end of the selection process are awarded with the YCS scholarship and who are graduates from a foreign University must legalize their degrees at the Kosovo Ministry of Education. The legalization of the degree is required by the Kosovo Civil Service Legislation, and it will be compulsory for all Round XIV grantees.

A checklist is included for the applicants' convenience in the YCS Round XIV – 2024-2025 Application Form. Please make sure to have included all demanded documents to avoid disappointment and exclusion by failing to include required documents or for presenting them in the incorrect form (e.g., a CV or a Letter of Motivation not in English, or a YCS Round XIV - 2024 Application Form that has not been filled-in or signed, etc.). No applicants, under any circumstances, will be allowed to complete an incomplete application after submission (however, the YCS project team, in agreement with EUO and GoK, may demand applicants to complete their applications at a later stage if the missing documents are not of substantial nature). Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted under any circumstances, while incomplete applications at this stage will be rejected.

The complete applications from eligible candidates are formally accepted and the applicant is invited to sit the written exams.

If not, enough suitable applications are found within each sector, as defined by the call for applications, then EUO and GoK, may decide to accordingly reduce the number of available



scholarships so that at least a ratio of 2 applications for every scholarship awarded is kept (i.e., at least 60 applicants invited to the written exams for 30 scholarships).

## b) Written exams

The written tests consist of multiple-choice questionnaires on:

- 1) Knowledge of English Language.
- 2) EU General Knowledge test;
- 3) Verbal and Numerical Reasoning (VNR);

Anonymity of applicants will be ensured by numerical codes given to each applicant on the day of written exam to be written in the answer sheets. Overall, the written exams accounts for up to 50% (or 50 points) of the total maximum score of the scholarship's selections (100 points).

The "Knowledge of English Language" test aims at ascertaining the level of English knowledge of candidates. However, the test does not count towards the final ranking of candidates (i.e., it does not accumulate points towards the final ranking). This test is an "in or out" threshold exam. This means that applicants are required to pass the 65% threshold of correct answers, in order the results of the other 2 written tests to be considered.

The other two components of the written exam count respectively 20 points (for EU General Knowledge test), and 30 points (for Verbal & Numerical Reasoning test), meaning that the total score for the written test is 50 points. Hence, a cumulative total of maximum 50 points is awarded for the written exams.

The candidates will be then invited to interviews as per their ranking within each sector according with the ratio of 2 (two) candidates invited for each available scholarship.

The three different written tests will take place on the same day.

Before entering the examination rooms all candidates must prove their identity and be checked against an accredited list, sign for their admission while their presence is validated by a member of the YCS project team.

Upon admission to the examination room candidates will be asked to leave personal belongings (e.g. coats, mobile phones – turned off, electronic equipment, bags etc.) at a designated point in the room. TOTAL silence is demanded from the candidates.



Once the examination has commenced any candidate who has a question must raise his/her hand and wait for an invigilator to respond to his/her needs. Candidates requiring the use of restrooms will be accompanied by a same gender member of staff.

Upon completion of their tests, candidates can leave the examination hall with the exception that he/she is obliged to wait in the hall in case that there is only one candidate left.

As mentioned earlier, any candidate contravening the rules of the written exams (i.e. caught talking, copying or cheating in any form) will be asked to leave the room and have his/her papers marked “expelled”.

NB: We stress that the written exams will last the whole day (from 9am ca. to 5pm ca. with one hour break for lunch), so we strongly advise all candidates to take at least some water with them during both sessions – morning and afternoon). Water will not be provided by YCS invigilators and staff.

#### 1) Knowledge of English Language

The English Language Test aims at ascertaining at least a strong upper-intermediated level of English, as such defined by the IELTS and TOEFL examining and scoring protocols that will be used as guidelines for the test. This test is therefore foreseen as determining the candidate’s level of English and his/her overall suitability of joining the program.

The English tests will be composed of 3 different sections:

- a) Listening comprehension
- b) Reading comprehension
- c) Grammar tests.

Each section will take 45 mins to sit.

As anticipated above, to be admitted to sitting interviews and getting their scores in other two written tests (i.e. EUGK and VNR) candidates must score at least an average of 65% of the possible correct answers in the 3 combined English tests (this score is equivalent to a IELTS Band of 5.5). Any candidates with less than 65% of the possible correct answers in the English Language tests will be eliminated at this stage, unless not enough suitable candidates are to be found within this threshold. In such a case, those candidates with at least 55% of the possible correct answers (equivalent to an IELTS Band between 5 and 5.5) might be conditionally considered, upon the obligation to follow intensive English training in the case they were to be eventually awarded scholarship, with no more



than 10% of missed classes allowed (instead of 20% applied to YCS grantees with 65% correct answers that are attending English training). These candidates would therefore receive, should they pass the interviews and be awarded a scholarship, a “conditional scholarship”, which may be withdrawn should the candidate not respect his/her obligations in terms of English training attendance.

On the other hand, if not enough suitable candidates are found within one of the four individual sectors, as indicated in the call for application, then candidates invited to the interviews may be recruited from the other lists, according to the needs of the GoK. In that case, the decisions will be taken based only on data which doesn't reveal any personal data of the candidates.

If enough suitable candidates are through at this stage, minimum 50 candidates will be invited to the third and final selection stage, the interviews (meaning that if there is more than one candidate in a sector with the same valid score to be invited for interviews at the last available place, he/she will be invited as well). The ratio for the interviews is of approximately 2 invited applicants for each available scholarship, i.e. two interviewees for each available scholarship. This means that applicants will be invited to the interviews up to twice the number of available scholarships for each sector.

If not enough candidates will be available, this ratio will be lowered to 1,5 invited applicants for each available scholarship.

## 2) EU General Knowledge test (EUGK)

The EU General Knowledge test will be composed by 80 multiple-choice questions (each question will have 4 possible replies, only one is the correct one).

The duration of this written test is maximum 1h30min. Each question is worth 0.25 points and the maximum score in the written test on EU is 20 points. This test must be taken by all candidates.

## 3) Verbal and Numerical Reasoning (VNR)

The Verbal & Numerical Reasoning test will be composed by 40 multiple-choice questions. The duration of this test is maximum 1h45min. Each question is worth 0.75 points and the maximum score in the Verbal & Numerical Reasoning test is 30. This test must be taken by all candidates.

The Verbal & Numerical Reasoning test, proposed to candidates only in English language, requires applicants to read and understand up to 8 short paragraphs and 5 tables and/or diagrams with numerical data. For each paragraph, table and/or diagram applicants have then to answer 3 to 4



multiple-choice questions related to the contents of that specific paragraph, table or diagram and demanding from them to elaborate and work with the information or the data contained in the specific paragraph in order to find the right answers. The use of calculator will not be allowed for the test as the numerical operations required to answer the questions will be of an elementary nature.

### c) Interviews

As mentioned above, minimum 50 candidates and maximum 60 candidates will be invited to the third and final selection stage, the interviews (meaning that if there is more than one candidate in a sector with the same valid score to be invited for interviews at the last available place he/she will be invited as well). The number of invited candidates it is based on the ratio for the interviews: 2 invited applicants for each available scholarship, i.e. two interviewees for each available scholarship.

Interviews will be conducted by a panel composed of an odd number of members (i.e. 5 EU academic experts from prominent EU universities); 2 more members representing the EU Office in Kosovo and the Government of Kosovo will attend the interviews as observers without scoring the candidates. YCS project team will assist the interview panel during all stages of the interviews.

Prior to each interview panel members and observers will review the CV and the Motivation Letter enclosed with the application of the candidate.

The interviews will last for no more than 30 minutes per each candidate, and they will consist of:

- a 5 minutes close door review by each panel member of applicant's file (CV, letter of motivation, transcripts and diploma),
- 5 minutes presentation in English and a 15 minutes interview in English on the candidate's background and motivation

and 5 minutes close door evaluation and discussion for the individual scoring of each candidate at the end of his interview.

Even if specified in his/her CV or motivation letter, knowledge of additional EU languages will not be considered as an asset and will not be evaluated by the panel in additional/separate scoring given to the candidate.

As specified above, each interview will be divided in three phases:

1. Review of the CV, motivation letter, transcripts and diploma (up to 5 min.).



During this phase and before the candidate enters the interview room, the five (5) members of the panel will consider the following elements and academic indicators to score the candidate:

- a) consistency of the CV with proposed sectors and sub-sectors (if they possess a diploma, publications, research work etc) 3 points;
- b) overall quality of the CV;(participation in seminars, relevant research, work experience, volunteer work) 3 points;
- c) level of motivation to attend the program and professional career prospects (if any) highlighted in the letter of motivation,1 point;
- d) academic results and performance of the candidate (based on copy of transcripts included in their application), 2 points;
- e) clarity, consistency, and relevance of the motivation letter to the scope of the program, 1 point

NB: if any candidate attempts to introduce and present to the panel additional materials (transcripts or other) at this stage he will be immediately disqualified and excluded from the competition (i.e. no late delivery of missing documents is possible at this stage).

## 2. Presentations made by each candidate (up to 5 min.)

The scope of this part of the interviews is to test the presentation and interpersonal skills of the candidates. Applicants invited to the interviews MUST prepare an oral presentation (no PPT or other media or physical supports allowed) linked to public policy making in Kosovo and/or to the process of EU integration of the country. Once invited to the interviews, the candidates will receive a detailed list of issues that need to be addressed in their presentation. If no presentation is prepared or if the presentation is not in line with the above or too general, the panel will interrupt the interview and invite the candidate to leave the room, excluding him/her from the selection.

Presentation topics related with public policy making or EU integration of Kosovo, must in addition be a subject within the specific sector where the candidate competes. Candidates who present a topic not related with their sector will be scored 0 on this part of the interview and therefore eliminated from the selection, no matter their presentation skills.

## 3. Interviews (up to 15 min)

The scope of this part of the interview is to assess the EU general knowledge of the candidate about some general cultural knowledge and some specific issues related with the sector he/she applied



for. Possible question will refer alternatively at several of the following topics (depending also on the sector each candidate applied for):

- a) EU integration process of Kosovo;
- b) EU policies and/or juridical principles governing EU action;
- c) EU Economic policy and challenges;
- d) EU Energy Policy;
- e) EU action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027;
- f) EU Foreign and Security Policy;
- g) EU Digital Strategy;
- h) General knowledge on the area of interest;
- i) Knowledge related to public administration/civil service;
- j) Real motivation to attend the scheme and knowledge about the scopes of the program;
- k) Readiness to serve in civil service for three consecutive years after the completion of his/her master studies abroad;
- l) Professional career prospects if any and/or ideas about master studies to be enrolled within;
- m) Other academic indicators such as, but not exclusively, conciseness and clarity in expression, logical articulation of thoughts and capacity to tackle a multilevel interview.

#### 4. Closed door evaluation (up to 5 min)

Candidates are scored once for the review of the CV and of the motivation letter, once for presentation contents and skills, and once for the results of the interview.

The scoring for each part will be the following:

- a) up to 10 points maximum for CV and motivation letter;
- b) up to 20 points for their presentation;
- c) up to 20 points for the interview.

Maximum 50 points (or 50% of the final score) are awarded for the interviews by each member of the panel in their individual evaluation sheet as the sum of the three parts detailed above.

Each member of the panel will be asked to comment and justify the scores for each part as well as his/her final score in the individual evaluation sheet.





Anyone below 25.0 points (50% of total points for interviews) is considered not to have passed the interviews. The partial score for the interview counts for up to 50% of the final aggregate score.

Final score given to each candidate is decided by consensus of panel members according to individual scores given in evaluation sheets. Where and if consensus amongst panel members cannot be reached the final mark of the candidate is calculated by making the mathematical average, without adding the highest and lowest marks.

The final consensus sheet must indicate clear comments and justifications to the overall score given by each member of the panel.

NB: According to the threshold set above for interviews (i.e. 25 points out of 50 max available) the minimum overall score to be awarded a scholarship is of at least 50 points (i.e., 50% of the maximum score of 100).

A lower or higher threshold can be agreed jointly by interview panel members and by EUO and GOK representatives who will attend all phases of the interviews if the results will be lower or higher than expected.

#### d) Final Results

The final results of the selections will be made public within 3 working days from the end of the interviews stage. A specific ranking will be published for each of the three sectors, with indication of the exact number of grantees (as well as reserve lists) for each sector.

How to calculate the final score?

**FINAL AGGREGATE SCORE:** The selection of candidates will be made on the basis of points awarded in the written tests and in the interviews, on a 50/50% basis. This means:

The Pre-selection stage (eligibility of applicants and complete applications) simply provides admission to or rejection from the other 2 stages of the Selections, but does not award any points;

The score on the written tests (EU General knowledge and Verbal & Numerical Reasoning) counts for up to 50% of the final score. Preliminary, candidates must also score at least 65% of correct answers in the English test conceived as threshold to pass to the evaluation of other two tests;

The score on the interview counts for up to 50% of the final score.



In practice this means that, e.g., candidate Mr/Mrs XY in the Law Sector:

- a) Pre-selections: Mr/Mrs XY is eligible, and he/she has presented a complete application, therefore he/she has been invited to the written exams;
- b) Written tests: Mr/Mrs XY obtains 65% of correct answers for English test and thus her/his VNR and GK are evaluated. He/she scores 16 points in General Knowledge in the area of interest test out of 20 points available (i.e. he/she had 64 correct answers out of 80), and in the Verbal and Numerical Reasoning test he/she obtains 27,75 points out of 30 points available (37 correct answers out of 40);
- c) In the interview Mr/Mrs XY scores an average of 9 points out of 10 available for his/her CV and motivation letter, 15 points out of 20 available for the presentation, and 12 out of 20 available for his interview, for a total of 36 out of 50.
- d) the final aggregate score is then calculated as follows: Written tests (27,75+16=43,75) + (9 + 15 + 12 = 36) = 79,75.

### III) Overall Plan

ACTIVITY	DATE
<b>ROUND XIV</b>	
Call for applications	6 April – 30 April 2024
Pre selection and selections of candidates	29 April – 21 May 2024
English language training and IELTS certification	25 May – June/July 2024
Internships in public administration	25 May – June/July 2024
Intensive compulsory training for conditional funds	25 May - June 2024 and, if needed, July 2024
Application and registration in EU MS universities	22 May – June/July 2024
VISA Application process	To be started as soon as applicants receive offers from the Universities and possibly no later than mid-June 2024.
Post graduate studies	August/October 2024 – September/October 2025/2026
(Re)integration of Round XIV Young Cell into Kosovo Public Administration or Public Institutions (including local government and municipalities)	From October 2025



## YCS Round XIV Evaluation Grid:

RXIII	PRE-SELECTIONS		WRITTEN EXAMS				INTERVIEWS				FINAL
RESULT	Rejected or Admitted		50% of the total score or max 50 points available				50% of the total score or max 50 points available				Admitted, 100%
			EN Tests	EU General Knowledge	Verbal & Numerical Reasoning	Written Exams TOTAL	CV and Motivation Letter	Presentation	Interview	Interviews Total	OVERALL TOTAL
	Rejected	Admitted	No points awarded	20%	30%	50%	10%	20%	20%	50%	100%
Test content	Ineligible candidate and/or incomplete application = REJECTED	Eligible candidate & Complete application = INVITED TO Written Exams	3 Tests (Reading, Listening, Comprehension and Grammar Test)	80 Multiple choice questions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Passing Threshold	Eligible candidate & Complete application		65%	50% (40 correct questions out of 80)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	50% (50 POINTS)
Max Points Available	n/a	n/a	n/a	20 Points	30 Points	50 Points	10 Points	20 Points	20 Points	50	100 Points





## YCS Round XIV Scoring Table:

RXIII	PRE-SELECTIONS		WRITTEN EXAMS				INTERVIEWS				FINAL
RESULT	Rejected or Admitted		50% of the total score or max 50 points available				50% of the total score or max 50 points available				
			EN Tests	EU General Knowledge	Verbal & Numerical Reasoning	Written Exams TOTAL	CV and Motivation Letter	Presentation	Interview	Interviews Total	
			No points awarded	20%	30%	50%	10%	20%	20%	50%	
Passing Threshold	Eligible candidate & Complete application		65%	50% (40 correct questions out of 80)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Max Points Available	n/a	n/a	n/a	20 Points	30 Points	50 Points	10 Points	20 Points	20 Points	50	Min 50/100 points TO BE AWARDED GRANT





## ANNEX I – RXIV Sectors Definition and Eligible Sectors

<b>European integration</b>				
Eligible Subsectors	Scholarships for this sector	Classification of position in civil service	Eligible BA Degree for this sector	Aim
1. EU Studies 2. European Law 3. Development Studies 4. Public Administration 5.	10	12. Social Science Group	Law, Economics (not specified), Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, History, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, Geography, Public Administration	Scholarships under this sector aim to provide scholarship to future civil servants who will work in the departments responsible for EU integration in the Office of the Prime Minister and line ministries.
<b>Law</b>				
Eligible Subsectors	Scholarships for this sector	Classification of position in civil service	Eligible BA Degree for this sector	Aim
1. European Law 2. International Law 3. Human Rights 4. Criminal Law 5. Public Law 6. Civil & Private Law 7. Patent Law 8. Intellectual Property Law 9. Competition Law 10. Business Law 11. Trade Law and International Commercial Law 12. Tax Law 13. Other areas of Law	8	1. Legal Group	Degree in Law (LLB)  NB: This means that only graduates in Law (min 180 ECTS) are eligible under this sector.	Scholarships under this sector aim to provide scholarship to future experts in Law (any branch of law). Individuals who will be awarded a grant under this sector will be employed by the Government of Kosovo as legal officers/ legal experts.
<b>Public Administration and Human Resources</b>				
Eligible Subsectors (MA/MSc)	Scholarships for this sector	Classification of position in civil service	Eligible BA Degree for this sector	Aim



1. Public Policies and Public Administration 2. Human Resource Management 3. Public Administration 4.	6	6. Human Resources Group	Law/Economics/Psychology, Public Administration, Pedagogy, Human Resource Management	Under this sector aim to provide scholarship to future experts that will be placed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs to deal directly with public administration reform.
<b>Diplomacy</b>				
Eligible Subsectors (MA/MSc)	Scholarships for this sector	Classification of position in civil service	Eligible BA Degree for this sector	Aim
1. International Relations 2. International Development 3. International Relations 4. Politics & Political Science	6	14. Foreign Service Group	Political Science, Law, International Relations, Security Policies, European Studies, Economics, Law and Diplomacy (economic, public and cultural) Public Administration	Under this sector aim to provide scholarships to future officials who will be placed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora.

Note: Kosovo's citizens with a valid Kosovo passport or ID card issued by Kosovo. In the absence of ID card or passport during application phase, birth certificate with citizenship certificate may be accepted.