SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship and SNSF Eccellenza Grant Guidelines

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1. General remarks and important information

The following guidelines are intended to support the applicants in the procedure of submitting their Eccellenza application. There are two distinct types of Eccellenza Awards: The SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship covers project funds and the full salary of the awardee for five years, while the SNSF Eccellenza Grant comprises project funds for an Assistant Professor with Tenure Track (APTT) for three to five years. For questions on eligibility and other concerns, please always refer to the “Regulations on SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships and SNSF Eccellenza Grants” (also available in German and French) and the Frequently Asked Questions (also available in German and French). The information provided in this document is considered complementary to the information available on the SNSF website and through the mySNF application mask.

Below you will find some general information to consider before entering your application. Section 2 provides some points of orientation for submitting your application. In section 3, the guidelines are loosely structured in accordance with the order of data containers on mySNF. Section 3 also contains mandatory formal requirements for documents such as the CV and publication list. The SNSF’s formal requirements help to ensure that applications are comparable. This is an important prerequisite for an evaluation based on the principle of competition and for the equal treatment of all applicants. Applications that do not meet the requirements for the project description (extended synopsis and the research plan), the formal requirements (Article 14 of the Funding Regulations) or the requirements for research integrity and good scientific practice (Article 15 of the Funding Regulations) will not be considered for evaluation.

Before getting started, please be reminded of some basic and important information:

- **Project window:** For a submission on 1 February 2020, the earliest possible starting date is 1 January 2021. The start of the Eccellenza Award can be postponed by no more than 12 months after the earliest possible starting date.

- **Eligibility window:** For SNSF Eccellenza Grants, submission is only possible if the deadline (1 February 2020) is no later than 18 months after the start of the APTT position. It is not possible to extend this window. The APTT position must be guaranteed by the host institution in Switzerland at the beginning of the proposed project independently from the outcome of the application. These guarantees must cover the entire duration of the project. For SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships, the precise period of eligibility extends from 3 years to 8 years after the date of the examination or thesis defence. The Eccellenza submission deadline must fall into this period. An extension of this window is only possible for the reasons stated in Article 1.11 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations. For further eligibility criteria, please refer to Articles 4 and 5 of the Eccellenza Regulations, consult the FAQs and finally do not hesitate to contact the Eccellenza team for any questions.

- **Host institution:** Make sure that you contact your host institution in time in order to secure their support for your application as soon as possible (see also 3.12 and 3.13).

- **Language of the application:** In Mathematics, Natural and Engineering Sciences, Biology, Medicine, Psychology and Economics, applications have to be submitted in English. In all other research areas, applications can also be submitted in one of the official Swiss languages (preferably in German or French; for Italian, please contact the SNSF administrative office). An
English translation must be enclosed if requested by the SNSF. Special rules apply for Political Sciences: As a rule, applications have to be submitted in English. However, researchers can submit applications in an official language if this is justified for scientific reasons, particularly if working in a specific language is appropriate to the nature of the research topic.

- **Evaluation procedure and its implications:** The SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships and SNSF Eccellenza Grants are part of the same Call and are evaluated in direct competition with each other. The evaluation procedure takes place in two phases (as described on the dedicated website). The extended synopsis outlining the planned research forms the basis for the scientific evaluation in phase 1. If the application is retained for phase 2 of the evaluation, the extended synopsis remains accessible for the research council but is not forwarded to external reviewers. **The research plan forms the basis of the scientific evaluation of those applications that are retained for phase 2,** and it is only during this phase that applications are peer-reviewed. The research plan does not form part of the evaluation for phase 1 and is not made accessible to evaluators at any time during this phase. Applicants not considered for phase 2 will be informed about the outcome in mid-July and receive the official decision by the end of August. Candidates selected for phase 2 are invited to an interview, held in September 2020, to present their research project and career plan. These candidates will be informed about the final decision by the end of November.

- **Parallel submissions for other SNSF funding instruments:** An Eccellenza application may only be submitted for a duration of support for which no other Career, Project Funding, Sinergia or SPIRIT application has been submitted to the SNSF. Eccellenza recipients may submit a Project Funding, Sinergia or SPIRIT application two years after starting the Eccellenza Award at the earliest. If you are already receiving Project, Sinergia or SPIRIT funding when applying for an Eccellenza Award you may continue said project if its research topic is clearly different from that of the Eccellenza application.

- **Parallel submission for an ERC Starting Grant:** An application for an ERC Starting Grant (ERC SG) does not prevent candidates from also applying for an Eccellenza Award. However, the Eccellenza application must specify to what degree the proposed project overlaps with the one applied for at the ERC, and candidates are obliged to inform the SNSF as soon as the outcome of their ERC SG application is known. The evaluation procedure takes the degree of overlap between the two projects into account. If an Eccellenza project is judged fundable, but overlaps significantly with an obtained ERC SG:
  - an SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship may be funded at a substantially reduced level, or the SNSF may decide to only fund the applicant’s own salary (no project funds);  
  - an SNSF Eccellenza Grant will not be funded if the degree of overlap is judged as too high.

- **Re-submission:** You may reapply once for an SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship; the SNSF Eccellenza Grant does not permit re-submissions (Articles 11 and 12 of the Eccellenza Regulations; all following articles refer to these regulations if not stated otherwise). If your application is a revised version of a rejected application for an SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship, you are required to prepare a point-for-point response to the critique raised in the rejection letter and note significant changes in/additions to the research plan. This separate document needs to be uploaded alongside the extended synopsis, must be written in the same language and cannot exceed one page (minimum font size: 10 points). A revised version of an application for an SNSF Professorship is not considered to be a resubmission.
2. Creating and submitting a grant application on mySNF

Applicants without an account have to register as users on mySNF. In the corresponding step during the registration, please make sure to select the correct division and funding instrument (Careers/Eccellenza). It may take several days to process your request for a mySNF account. Once you have an account, please select the correct division and funding instrument when creating a new application. Applications for the two types of Eccellenza Awards are created using the same submission forms. Before making any entries or uploading files, make sure to carefully read all information in this document as well as in the header of every data container.

The application must be submitted via mySNF no later than **17:00 Swiss local time** on the submission date (1 February). Since in 2020 this day falls on a Saturday, submission will be possible until Monday 3 February 2020, 17:00 Swiss local time. You will receive a confirmation of your submission via email. Please make sure that you have entered and uploaded all required documents and information according to the requirements stated in this document by the submission deadline. **Otherwise your application will not be considered.**

3. Entering and uploading application data on mySNF

This section complements information also available in the data containers on mySNF. It is meant to inform on formal requirements and other information necessary for the application documents.

3.1 Basic Data II

For the summary, we suggest to use the same text from the research plan, as the summary from this data container is provided to potential external reviewers as part of the initial contact inquiry.

3.2 Use-inspired project

Tick this box only if your application is “use-inspired” as described on mySNF. If you declare that an application is use-inspired, you need to describe the broader potential impact (e.g., on economy, industry, policy or administration) of the planned project in the research plan; this information will be considered in the evaluation of the application.

3.3 Requested funding

For SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships, the budget limit for project funds is CHF 1,000,000 for five years, i.e. an average of CHF 200,000 per annum (Article 3). The salary of the applicant is not included in this maximum amount. Regarding salaries for applicants in the clinical domain (distribution SNSF - clinic), please see the separate information sheet. The budget should be as detailed as possible (e.g., separate entries are required for equipment, access costs to infrastructure, consumables, travel, personnel, open access publications, etc.). Changes to the budget after the application has been submitted are not possible.

For SNSF Eccellenza Grants, the budget limit for project funds is CHF 1,500,000 for five years, i.e. an average of CHF 300,000 per annum (Article 3). The budget should be as detailed as possible (e.g., separate entries are required for equipment, access costs to infrastructure, consumables, travel, personnel, open access publications, etc.). Changes to the budget after the application has been submitted are not possible. The salary of the applicant for an SNSF Eccellenza Grant is in principle fully covered by the higher education institution; however, up to 20% of the salary may
be requested as part of this maximum amount. If part of the salary is to be covered by the SNSF, it must be added to the data container “Requested Funding” as “the applicants’ own salaries”. Please allocate these funds to the category “Salary of applicant”, not “Project”. If the recipient’s level of employment is less than 100%, the 20% covered by the SNSF will be reduced proportionally. The SNSF may set an upper limit for the eligible part of the salary (Article 10). Please enter your level of employment (in %) in the data container “General remarks on the project”.

For both types of Eccellenza Awards, research funds may be used to employ personnel (e.g., PhD student, postdoctoral researcher, technician, laboratory assistant, supporting assistant, etc.). There are no restrictions on the level of employment of personnel as long as the employment is justified in the application. Also note that the salary of the applicant may differ for every institution. The applicant should therefore contact the personnel office of the institution for the corresponding salary standards in advance. For more details see Annex 12 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations.

### 3.4 Data Management Plan

The application must include a Data Management Plan (DMP) set up according to the requirements issued by the SNSF. The aim of a DMP is to plan the lifecycle of data. It offers a long-term perspective by outlining how data will be generated, collected, documented, shared and preserved. The DMP is an integral part of the application. Its content must be entered directly in the mySNF submission mask. It is not possible to upload a DMP as a separate PDF file. Applicants must enter a DMP that is understandable, suits their project and meets the standards set by their research community. The submitted DMP is considered a draft; it remains excluded from the evaluation process and will not be shared with external reviewers. The application can only be submitted once the DMP data container has been completed. The definitive DMP must be provided by the end of the project at the latest.

### 3.5 Exclusion of external reviewers

Applicants cannot submit a list of potential external reviewers; however, they are entitled to submit a list of persons with addresses who are not to be asked for an external review. The SNSF may abide by this list if the applicants provide a valid reason for the requested exclusion and if a sufficient number of other experts are available. For additional information on the evaluation procedure, please see section 1.

### 3.6 Diplomas: Relevant date of PhD / medical exam for fulfilling personal requirements

For applicants with a PhD, the date of the examination or defence of the thesis is decisive for calculating the eligibility (see above). For applicants who have completed their medical exam, the date of the medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) is relevant. In case the certificate does not show said date, please provide a written confirmation from the institution stating the date. Do not use the date the certificate was issued in any part of your application. For applicants without a PhD or MD, completion of three years of research work as their main source of income after the date a higher education degree was obtained will generally be considered as equivalent to a doctorate. Applicants for an SNSF Eccellenza Grant must also provide their diplomas/certificates.
3.7 Extended synopsis (5 pages, basis for the evaluation in phase 1)

The extended synopsis is crucial to succeed in phase 1 of the evaluation. It outlines the research planned by the applicant and the employees in sufficient detail to allow for a scientific evaluation according to the criteria described in Article 13. Together with the CV and the applicant's track record, the extended synopsis serves as a basis for assessing the researcher's scientific qualifications, particularly his/her expertise with regard to the project. It is important that this extended synopsis contains all essential information, including an outline of the scientific work plan, since the panel will only evaluate this synopsis during phase 1 of the evaluation. The extended synopsis must be written in the same language as the research plan. It must be formulated as a self-contained write-up and should not make any reference to the research plan.

This document must not exceed five pages (A4 paper size) and 20,000 characters (including spaces)\(^1\); this includes title, footnotes, illustrations, formulae, tables, etc., but not the bibliography (mandatory list of sources/references at the end of the document). A minimum font size of 10 points and line spacing of at least 1.5 must be used. No forms or templates are provided by the SNSF. The extended synopsis must be uploaded in its final form as a single file and may not include attachments of any kind. No modifications are allowed after submission.

3.8 Research plan (20 pages, evaluated in phase 2 only)

The research plan provides the basis for the scientific evaluation, particularly of the quality of the proposed research project, i.e. its scientific relevance, topicality, originality, feasibility and the suitability of its methods. The research plan must be formulated as a stand-alone document. External reviewers will not have access to the extended synopsis described above.

The research plan is an original text written by the applicant. A limited amount of text (or other material, graphs, etc.) by third parties or text published previously by the applicant is permissible in the sections concerning the state of research (2.1) and the state of his/her personal research (2.2) as well as when describing standard methods. The quoted texts must be clearly designated as such (quotation marks or appropriate wording) and a verifiable source must be mentioned nearby and in the bibliography. For more details see the SNSF dossier on scientific integrity.

The research plan must not exceed 20 pages (A4 paper size) and 80,000 characters (including spaces); this includes the title (including cover/title page and if applicable a table of contents), the summary, footnotes, illustrations, formulae, tables, etc., but not the bibliography (mandatory list of sources/references at the end of the document). A minimum font size of 10 points and line spacing of at least 1.5 must be used. The research plan must be uploaded in its final form as a single file and may not include attachments of any kind. No modifications are allowed after submission.

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\(^1\) Page and character limits must always be respected independently for both extended synopsis and research plan, e.g., for the extended synopsis:
- 20,000 characters on 5 pages is within the limit
- 19,000 characters on 6 pages is **NOT** within the limit and will result in a decision of non-consideration
- 21,000 characters on 4 pages is **NOT** within the limit and will result in a decision of non-consideration
The single file uploaded as “research plan” needs to contain all of the following elements:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Summary</td>
<td>In the summary (maximum 1 page, included in the limit of 20 pages and 80,000 characters!), please present the background and rationale of the project, list its overall objectives and specific aims, mention the methods to be used, and briefly discuss the expected results and their impact for the field. It must be written in the language of the research plan. We suggest to use this summary also for the data container “Basic Data II” on mySNF.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Research Plan | Describe your project in the context of the current state of knowledge in your field. Make reference to the most important publications, particularly by other authors. Please describe:  
- which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies;  
- in which areas research is needed, and why;  
- which important, relevant research projects are currently underway in Switzerland and abroad. |
| 2.1 Current state of research in the field | Please present the research work you have already undertaken in the relevant field or in related fields, describe the results obtained so far as well as the relevance of these preliminary undertakings for your project. |
| 2.2 Current state of personal research | Based on the information provided under 2.1 and 2.2, please specify the approach you are taking and the concrete objectives that you aim to achieve in the period of funding. The following points should be addressed:  
- Describe the studies or experiments needed and/or envisaged to reach the set goals. Assess the risks involved and propose alternatives if necessary.  
- Characterise existing sources and datasets and describe the data collection strategy and possible alternative strategies.  
- Describe the methods by which the research goals are to be reached and discuss methods that first have to be developed.  
- Explain the role and the planned work of each member of the research team (incl. applicant, employees and collaborations).  
Your description should be as detailed as necessary to enable an expert to assess whether your methodology is appropriate and your project feasible. Please refer to the work described here in the budget you submit via mySNF. |
| 2.3 Detailed research plan | Please compile a schedule that includes the most important milestones (e.g., table, Gantt chart, etc.). This plan should also indicate the main tasks with which the persons funded by the SNSF/involved in the project are to be entrusted. |
| 2.4 Schedule and milestones | Scientific relevance  
Please describe the scientific relevance and expected impacts of your project for the discipline and for science as a whole (research and education/teaching). Please mention the form in which you intend to publish your research results (articles in scientific journals, monographs, conference proceedings, etc.).  
Broader impact  
If you have categorized your project as use-inspired research, please indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be. The following points should be addressed:  
- Define the need for research from the perspective of practitioners/industry. Are there any knowledge gaps? What innovations and improvements are expected?  
- To what degree can the expected research results be put into practice?  
- In which spheres outside science could the implementation of the research results entail changes and what is the nature of these changes? |
| 2.5 Relevance and impact | Provide references for all sources referred to in the research plan. Give the full reference, especially the title, source and full author list. **Do not use "et al." to shorten the author list.** (Exception: The author list can be shortened if a publication involves large international consortia with over 50 authors. In this case, a link to the complete reference has to be included). The bibliography is not included in the maximum number of pages (20) and characters (80,000) count. |
3.9 CV and major scientific achievements

The SNSF has signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment [DORA], which recommends that funders are explicit about the criteria used in evaluating the scientific productivity of applicants. In order to comply with DORA, the SNSF requests a standardised set of information from all applicants.

The CV and a short statement of major scientific achievements must be assembled in one document and be written in the same language as the research plan. The CV must not exceed 3 pages (minimum font size 10 points) and must be structured as follows. It is important that all dates at least include month and year. Additional points can be added, if relevant.

1. Personal information, including researcher ID (e.g., OrcID, ResearcherID, Google Scholar ID)
2. Education: Mention the day of your PhD viva voce/defence and the name of the PhD advisor/s. For applicants who have completed medical studies, the date of the medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent) and the date of the MD thesis must be mentioned.
3. Employment history including current position/s with the name/s of the advisor/s
4. Institutional responsibilities
5. Approved research projects as Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI (please specify)
6. Supervision of junior researchers at graduate and postgraduate level (summary information, the names of the junior researchers should be indicated)
7. Teaching activities (summary information)
8. Memberships in panels, boards, etc., and individual scientific reviewing activities
9. Active memberships in scientific societies, fellowships in renowned academies
10. Organisation of conferences
11. Prizes, awards, fellowships
12. Career breaks (provide justification)

In the section "Major scientific achievements" (maximum 1 page to be attached to the CV, minimum font size 10 points) please emphasize your most important scientific achievements. Describe for each achievement your specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

3.10 Career plan

The career plan should briefly describe past career achievements putting emphasis on medium- and long-term career goals. It must not exceed one page (minimum font size: 10 points). No forms or templates are provided by the SNSF.

3.11 Research output list

The research output list is used in the evaluation process to assess the scientific productivity, the scientific quality, the scientific independence and qualification of an applicant with regard to the proposed project and his/her ability to successfully conduct and document a research project. These aspects are also taken into account in the evaluation of the feasibility of the proposed research project. The total number of publications or number of publications per year are not considered to be the only indicator of performance. Depending on the research field, the applicant’s position in the list of authors may provide an indication on his/her contribution to the scientific work (see also: Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences: Guidelines and Recommendations, in particular the brochure “Authorship in scientific publications”).
Separate your publications resulting from your PhD/medical exam (or prior) and from your postdoctoral time and highlight the 5 most important. For all publications listed from your postdoctoral time, give a very short comment on your contribution; in particular for publications with several authors, where the applicant is not first or last author, or for disciplines where the authors are in alphabetical order.

The applicant’s name in the list of authors and the publication year must be clearly visible (e.g. boldfaced or underlined). Give the full reference and do not use "et al." to shorten the list of authors, unless the research project was conducted by a large international collaboration with more than 50 authors and a direct link to the full publication is given. Authors must always be listed in the same order as in the publication itself, including for shared first authorships. In order to support the principle of open electronic access to scientific knowledge nationally and internationally, provide a direct internet link for each publication, if applicable.

Candidates in Humanities and Social Sciences must expose the status of their Habilitation. They have to state whether their Habilitation thesis is published or submitted. Otherwise, specify when the publication is expected and upload a corresponding contract/agreement with the publisher in the container "Other annexes".

The research output list should be structured as specified below. Only "published", "in press" or "accepted" publications may be listed under points 1-4 (for "submitted" manuscripts, please refer to point 11 below). All entries in every category should be numbered. Ensure that all required categories below are listed and indicate "none" in case of absence of items in a given category. Updates after the submission deadline are not allowed.

1. Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals
2. Peer-reviewed books/monographs
3. Peer-reviewed conference proceedings
4. Contributions to books
5. Patents and licenses
6. Outreach activities (science communication: e.g., public engagement in science, technology and knowledge transfer activities, art performances, etc.)
7. General contributions to science (e.g., spokesperson for experiments, leader of expeditions, founder of networks and training programmes, etc.)
8. Other artefacts with documented use (e.g., maps, methods, prototype demos, software, databases, design, contributions to big data collaborations, etc.)
9. Preprints publicly available on a moderated repository (e.g., arXiv, bioRxiv, EarthArXiv, etc.).
10. Submitted manuscripts/monographs that are not accessible via a repository for preprints (Specify the journal/publisher where the document has been submitted, and upload both the proof of submission and the manuscript/monograph in the container "Other annexes").

3.12 Confirmation of the higher education institution

The written confirmation of the higher education institution consists of two separate letters:

1. Detailed confirmation of the higher education institution signed by the head of the institute/department. This letter refers to the obligations which are stated in the Eccellenza regulations, in particular Article 5 (if applicable) and Article 8.

2. General confirmation of the vice rectorate for research (or equivalent).

The directorate of the institute/department should forward the detailed confirmation of the higher education institution (point 1) to the vice-rectorate for research to receive the general confirmation.
(point 2). Then, the head of the institute/department at the higher education institution should send both confirmations to the applicant for a timely submission of the application. Both confirmations must use the text template provided by the SNSF and be written on paper using the official letterhead of the higher education institution. The application will only be regarded as complete if all the relevant points are addressed. The text template is available in German, French and English.

3.13 Cover letter: Rationale for choice of higher education institution

Mobility is an important evaluation criterion (see Article 13). In general, it is advisable to justify the choice of the higher education institution in the cover letter. In particular for the following cases, the choice should be carefully motivated and will be assessed based on the rationale provided:

- The applicant has already spent more than two years as postdoctoral researcher in the past at the selected higher education institution.
- The applicant would like to return to the higher education institution where he/she received his/her PhD or completed his/her medical exam.
- The applicant would like to join the higher education institution of his/her PhD advisor.

3.14 Other annexes: Letters of support

The submission of reference letters/letters of support is not required. However, applicants are free to add such letters to their application (e.g., from collaborators). These documents should be uploaded in the container “Other annexes”.

Berne, 29 October 2019