

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 a comparative 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 be formally rejected.

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

- Project window

For a submission on 1 February 2019, the earliest possible starting date is 1 January 2020. 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 2019) 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.

- Parallel submissions and re-submissions

Please note that an Eccellenza application may only be submitted for a duration of support for which no other career, Project Funding or Sinergia application has been submitted to the SNSF. If you are already receiving project or Sinergia funding when applying for an SNSF Eccellenza Award, you may continue the project, provided its research topic is clearly different from that of the Eccellenza application. For an SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship you can reapply once, the SNSF Eccellenza Grant does not permit re-submissions (see 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 Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship, you must 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 together with the extended synopsis. It must be written in the same language and must be no longer than one page (minimum font size: 10 points). A revised version of a rejected application for an SNSF Professorship is not considered to be a resubmission.

- Evaluation procedure and its implications

The SNSF Eccellenza Fellowships and SNSF Eccellenza Grants form part of the same call and therefore are jointly evaluated in direct competition. The evaluation procedure takes place in two phases (as described on the [dedicated website](#)). In phase 1, the SNSF National Research Council makes an initial selection based only on the documents submitted. The two documents that form the basis for the project evaluation are the extended synopsis and the research plan. **The extended synopsis outlining the planned research forms the basis for the scientific evaluation during 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. All candidates selected for phase 2 are invited to an interview, to be held in September 2019, to present their research project and career plan. These candidates will be informed about the final decision by the end of November. Applicants not considered for phase 2 will be informed about the outcome around mid-July and receive the official decision by the end of August.

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 (Central European Time) on 1 February 2019. 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 that time. **Otherwise your application will not be considered.**

3. Entering and uploading application data on *mySNF*

This section is dedicated to complementing information already available in the data containers at *mySNF*. It is meant to inform on formal requirements for documents and other information necessary for the application.

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 paragraph 3). **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 *my*SNSF 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, see section 1.

3.6 Diplomas: Relevant date of PhD/completion of 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 (five pages, basis for the phase 1 evaluation)

The extended synopsis is **crucial** to 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. It should give a concise presentation of the scientific application, with particular attention to the groundbreaking nature of the research project and the feasibility of the outlined scientific approach. 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.

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. Together with the CV and the applicant's track record, the research plan serves as a basis for assessing the researcher's scientific qualifications, particularly his/her expertise with regard to the project. 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 as a single file and therefore cannot have any documents annexed as separate files.

The single document uploaded as “research plan” needs to contain the following elements:

1. Summary	In the summary (maximum 1 page, <u>included in the limit of 20 pages and 80,000 characters¹</u>), 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 <i>mySNF</i> .
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¹ Page and character limits must always be respected independently. *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
21,000 characters on 4 pages is NOT within the limit

<p>2. Research Plan</p> <p>2.1 Current state of research in the field</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
<p>2.2 Current state of personal research</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>2.3 Detailed research plan</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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). <p>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 <i>mySNF</i>.</p>
<p>2.4 Schedule and milestones</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>2.5 Relevance and impact</p>	<p>Scientific relevance</p> <p>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.).</p> <p>Broader impact</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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?
<p>3. Bibliography</p>	<p>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). <u>The bibliography is not included in the maximum number of pages (20) and characters (80,000) count.</u></p>

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 that is described in the following three sections.

“CV and major scientific achievements” form the basis for assessing the following criteria during the evaluation (CV and major scientific achievements are assessed during phase 1; in phase 2, they are sent out for peer-reviewing):

- Eligibility of the applicant for Eccellenza
- Scientific qualifications of the applicant, based on past achievements
- Ability of the applicant to conduct original research of high scientific quality and impact under his/her own responsibility

“CV and major scientific achievements” must be written in the same language as the extended synopsis and research plan and should be assembled in one document. The CV must not exceed **three pages** (minimum font size: 10 points) and **all dates have to at least include month and year**. It must follow the structure listed below. Additional points can be added if relevant to the application.

1. Personal information including researcher ID (e.g. OrcID, ResearcherID, Google Scholar ID) and photo
2. Education: Please mention the day of your PhD defence and the name of the PhD advisor/s. For applicants who have completed their medical exam, the date of the medical license (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) and the date of the MD thesis should be mentioned
3. Employment history including current position/s with the name/s of the advisor/s
4. Institutional responsibilities
5. Approved research projects
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)

The “major scientific achievements” (maximum **one page**, minimum point 10 font size) have to be attached to the CV as part of the same document. Please describe for each important scientific achievement your specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

Applications that lack the relevant information or fail to comply with the formal requirements will not be considered for evaluation.

3.10 Career plan

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

3.11 Research output list

In addition to research publications, the scientific quality, value and impact of the entire research output is taken into consideration (including datasets, software and prototypes). In this context, the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the name of the journal in which it was published. Furthermore, during the evaluation procedure, the SNSF takes into account the respective scientific discipline, academic age and personal situation (e.g. career breaks, child care duties).

In the evaluation process, the research output list is used to assess the scientific productivity and qualification of an applicant with regard to the proposed project and the applicant's ability to successfully conduct and document a research project. The research output of an applicant is used, among others, as a measure of his/her scientific independence. The total number of publications or the number of publications per year is not considered to be the only indicator of performance. Depending on the research field, the applicant's position in the list of authors may give an indication on his/her contribution to the scientific work (see also: Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences: [Guidelines and Recommendations](#), in particular "Authorship in scientific publications").

All of the following items are intended for evaluators to specifically assess the scientific quality and relevance of the research output in a comparable manner. The research output list should be structured as follows (if applicable):

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. Oral contributions to conferences (talk or poster)
7. Outreach activities (science communication: e.g. public engagement in science, technology and knowledge transfer activities, art performances, etc.)
8. General contributions to science (e.g. spokesperson for experiments, leader of expeditions, founder of networks and training programmes, etc.)
9. Other artefacts with documented use (e.g. maps, methods, prototype demos, software, databases, design, arXiv articles, contributions to big data collaborations, etc.)

When preparing your research output list, remember to:

- a. Separate your publications resulting from your PhD/medical exam (or prior) and those resulting from your postdoctoral time, and **highlight the five most important**.
- b. **Give a very short comment on your contribution** for all publications listed from your postdoctoral time, in particular for publications with several authors where you are not first or last author, or for disciplines where the authors are in alphabetical order.
- c. **Clearly indicate your name** in the list of authors. The publication year must also be clearly visible (e.g. boldfaced or underlined).
- d. **Use the full original reference**, especially the title, source and full author list. 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.

- e. **Only use "published", "in press" or "accepted" publications** listed under points 1 to 4 of the structure given above. **Refrain from using the category "forthcoming"/"under review"** or similar categories in other languages.
- f. **Provide a direct internet link for each publication**, if applicable.
- g. NOT upload any publications in the container "Other annexes". They will be deleted directly and not taken into account.

Applications that lack the relevant information or fail to comply with the formal requirements will not be considered for evaluation.

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, 25 October 2018