PRIMA Guidelines

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You can consult the PRIMA Regulations in German, French or English.

The SNSF will formally reject applications that do not meet the personal requirements (Art. 5 and 6 of the PRIMA Regulations), the requirements for the research plan, the formal requirements for the application (Art. 14 of the Funding Regulations) and the requirements for research integrity and good scientific practice (Art. 15 of the Funding Regulations).

1. **Personal requirements**

You must have at least 24 months of postdoctoral research experience and submit an application no later than 10 years after your PhD defense or 14 years after your medical exam.

This eligibility window can be extended by the actual duration of your career interruption according to one or more reasons listed in the Art. 1.11 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations. Mothers are entitled to 18 months extension per child born after the PhD defense or the medical exam.

Professors are not eligible for PRIMA.

Mobility is not a personal requirement but is an assessment criterion. However, if you have shown no mobility since your PhD defense or your medical exam, a stay at another host institution must be planned during the PRIMA grant (mention this in the cover letter).

2. **Parallel submissions**

The requested duration of your PRIMA application can’t overlap with the duration of support of SNSF grants under the project funding scheme, Sinergia or programmes (as applicant or other applicant) that have been applied for, approved or are ongoing.

Within the career funding schemes, it is permissible to submit in parallel an application for Postdoc.Mobility return grants. PRIMA grantees can apply for an Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship 18 months after starting the PRIMA grant (Art. 13 for the PRIMA Regulations).

Before preparing an application consult the relevant articles on parallel submissions in the regulations for each funding instruments concerned.

3. **Assessment criteria**

All eligible applications are scientifically evaluated according to the assessment criteria listed in Art. 15 of the PRIMA Regulations. Keep in mind that PRIMA is aimed at excellent women researchers who show a high potential for obtaining a professorship during or, at the latest, after the PRIMA grant. You can refer to the results for each call under the section “Statistics”.

The SNSF has signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). Your scientific productivity is evaluated using your entire research output (including research articles, datasets, software, prototypes). The scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the name of the journal in which it was published.

The scientific discipline and the career stage (e.g. career breaks, child care duties) are taken into account.

In order to comply with the DORA, the SNSF requests a standardised set of information, the CV and major scientific achievements (section 7.6) and the research output list (section 7.8).
4. **Timelines**

The call for proposals opens on 1 August 2019 with submission deadline on 1 November 2019 at 5 pm Swiss local time.

The evaluation procedure takes place in two phases. In phase 1, the National Research Council makes an initial selection based on the submitted documents. Applicants are informed on the outcome of phase 1 by the end of April and, if selected, invited for an interview at the SNSF. Applications selected for phase 2 are peer-reviewed. The final decisions are communicated by the end of August.

Grants can be started at the earliest on 1 September 2020 and at the latest on 1 September 2021.

5. **How to (re)submit**

Proposals have to be submitted electronically via mySNF. Select the corresponding division and funding instrument (Careers/PRIMA). To create a new mySNF account it may take several days. If you already have a mySNF account, check that the role “grant applicant” is present.

As stated in Art. 14 of the PRIMA Regulations, you can apply only one more time for a PRIMA grant if your application has been rejected. If you resubmit, upload a document (max. 2 pages) in the container “Research plan” providing a point-for-point response to the critique raised in the rejection letter and a comment on significant changes in the research plan.

6. **Research institution**

6.1 **Choice of the research institution**

PRIMA grantees conduct their research in a research institution in Switzerland. All publicly funded research institutions are eligible: universities, university hospitals, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education, research centres (e.g. PSI, EMPA, EAWAG) or institutes of postgraduate education (e.g. IDIAP, IHEID).

You should carefully justify the choice of the research institution in the cover letter. Your scientific independence at the chosen research institution is an assessment criterion. In addition, the research institution must be suitable to conduct your research project.

6.2 **Written confirmation of the research institution**

You must contact as soon as possible your chosen research institution to ask for a written confirmation which refers to the obligations stated in the PRIMA Regulations, in particular Art. 8 and Art. 12.

The written confirmation of the research institution consists of two separate letters:

1. Detailed confirmation of the research institution signed by the contact person (leader of the research group) mentioned in the application and the head of the institute/department.

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

Both confirmations must follow the text template available in German, French and English and use the official letterhead of the research institution.

7. **How to prepare your application on mySNF**
7.1 Budget for salaries

The requested budget comprises your salary determined by the SNSF in agreement with the research institution and the project funds amounting to max. 750'000 CHF for the 5 years of the grant.

PRIMA grantees are expected to work full time (100%). You may reduce your work-time percentage in justified cases (Art. 6 of the PRIMA Regulations). The reasons should be explained in the cover letter. Clinical scientists can opt to dedicate a share of their work time to clinical activities: up to 20% for the first 2 years and up to 50% from year 3 onwards. The salary share dedicated to clinical activities is not covered by the PRIMA grant.

Contact in advance the HR department of your research institution for the accurate salaries (yours and the ones of your personnel). The social security contributions of the employer are covered as well. The fields labelled “Social security contributions (%)” are automatically calculated according to the selected research institution in the container “University or research institution”.

You must enter your own salary. If you don’t know the accurate number, enter an average gross salary of 105’000 CHF per year for a work-time percentage of 100%.

7.2 Budget for project funds

The budget should be as detailed as possible. Costs for open access publications must be applied for separately. Changes in the budget after the submission of the application are not possible. For more details see Art. 9, 10 and 11 of the PRIMA Regulations.

Research funds also cover the personnel (e.g. PhD student, postdoc, other employees). Justify the work-time percentage in the comment section of the Budget. The supervisor of the PhD student(s) must be confirmed in the written confirmation of the research institution (see 6.2).

7.3 Data Management Plan

The proposal must include a Data Management Plan (DMP). 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 proposal can only be submitted once the DMP has been completed. The content of the DMP is directly entered in the mySNF submission form. You must enter a DMP that is understandable, suits your project and meets the standards set by your research community.

At this stage, the DMP is considered a draft and excluded from the evaluation process. It is not part of the scientific evaluation process and is not shared with external reviewers. However, the definitive DMP must be provided by the end of the project at the latest.

7.4 External peer-reviewing

You are entitled to submit a list of persons who are not to be asked for an external review during the second phase of the evaluation. The SNSF may abide by this list if a valid reason is provided and if a sufficient number of other experts are available.

7.5 Research plan

The research plan must consist of original text that you have written. A limited amount of text (or other material, graphs, etc.) by third parties or text published by yourself is permissible if clearly designated as such (quotation marks or appropriate wording) and a verifiable source must be
The SNSF uses a special software to compare texts and to analyse suspected cases of plagiarism. For more details see the SNSF policy on scientific integrity.

In mathematics, natural and engineering sciences, biology, medicine, psychology, economics and political sciences, applications have to be submitted in English. In all other research areas, applications can be submitted in one of the official Swiss languages. An English translation must be enclosed if requested by the SNSF. Special rules apply for political sciences; researchers will still be able to submit proposals in an official Swiss language should this be justified for scientific reasons, particularly if working in a specific language is appropriate to the nature of the research topic.

The research plan must not exceed **15 pages** (DIN A4) and **60'000 characters** (with spaces); this includes the title or title page, possible table of contents, summary, footnotes, illustrations, formulae, tables, but not the bibliography. A minimum of point 10 font size (condensed fonts not allowed) and 1.5 line spacing must be used. Annexed documents cannot be included. The research plan needs to be structured as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Summary (~1 page)</th>
<th>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 in the field.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Research Plan</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| 2.1 Current state of research in the field | Describe your project in the context of the current state of knowledge in your field. Reference to the most important publications, particularly by other authors. Describe:
- which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies;
- in which areas is research needed, and why;
- which important, relevant research projects are currently underway in Switzerland and abroad. |
| 2.2 Current state of personal research | 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. |
| 2.3 Detailed research plan | Based on the information provided under 2.1 and 2.2, 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 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;
- methods by which the research goals are to be reached (by you and your team or with collaborations) and methods that first have to be developed;
- explain the role and the planned work of each member of the research team (incl. you, personnel 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. Refer to the work described here in the budget. |
| 2.4 Schedule and milestones | Compile a schedule that includes the most important milestones (e.g. table, Gantt chart). This plan should also indicate the main tasks with which the persons funded by the SNSF/involved in the project are to be entrusted. |
2.5 Relevance and impact

Describe the scientific relevance and expected impact of your project for the discipline and for science as a whole (research and education/teaching). Mention the form in which you wish to publish your research results. If applicable, indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be.

3. Bibliography

List the sources of all concluded or ongoing work referred to in the research plan. Give the full reference and do not use "et al." to shorten the author list. The author list can only 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 (15) and characters (60'000) count.

7.6 CV and major scientific achievements

The CV (max. 3 pages; min. point 10 font size) and a statement of major scientific achievements (max. 1 page) should be assembled in one document and be written in the same language as the research plan.

It is important that all dates include month and year. The CV must be structured as follows:

1. Personal information, including the researcher ID (e.g. ORCID, ResearcherID, Google Scholar ID)
2. Education: date of PhD defense / medical exam (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) / MD thesis and the name of the advisor(s)
3. Employment history including current position and the name 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

For the major scientific achievements, describe your most important scientific achievements. For each achievement indicate your specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

7.7 Career plan

You should briefly describe your past career achievements and then explain your objectives during and after completion of the PRIMA grant. In particular, state the reasons why the PRIMA grant may increase your chances to be appointed as a professor. The career plan must not exceed one page (min. point 10 font size and 1.5 line spacing).

7.8 Research output list

The research output list is used in the evaluation process to assess your scientific independence, your productivity, your qualification for the proposed project, the quality of your past research and your ability to successfully conduct a research project.
Separate your publications resulting from your PhD or your 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 short comment on your contribution. **Do NOT add journal-based metrics such as the journal impact factor.**

Your name in the list of authors and the publication year must be clearly visible (e.g. boldfaced or underlined). 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. Do not change the order of authors also for publications with shared authorship. Provide an internet link for each publication, if applicable.

The research output list should be structured as follows (if applicable) - under points 1 - 4 only "published", "in press" or "accepted" publications can be listed:

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 (e.g. public engagement in science, technology and knowledge transfer activities, scientific art performances)
8. General contributions to science (e.g. spokesperson for experiments, leader of expeditions, founder of networks and training programmes)
9. Other artefacts with documented use (e.g. maps, methods, prototype demos, software, databases, design, contributions to big data collaborations)
10. Preprints (e.g. arXiv, bioRxiv, EarthArXiv…)
11. Submitted manuscripts. Specify the publisher where it has been submitted and upload the confirmation from the journal as well as the manuscript in the container "Other annexes".

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