

English is not an official language of Switzerland. This translation is provided for information purposes only and has no legal force.

Regulations on the awarding of PRIMA¹ grants

of 11 July 2018

The National Research Council,
based on Articles 4 and 48 of the Funding Regulations of 27 February 2015²,
issues the following Regulations:

1. General

Article 1 Objectives and principles

¹ The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) awards PRIMA grants to outstanding women researchers in all disciplines who have a doctoral degree or equivalent research experience and aim to pursue an academic career as a professor in Switzerland.

² PRIMA grants promote the scientific independence and autonomy of highly qualified women researchers with excellent research ideas, thereby increasing their chances of obtaining a professorship at a higher education institution in Switzerland. Women with untypical career paths are also eligible to apply for funding under PRIMA.

³ PRIMA grants are flexible, cover salaries and project costs and allow mobility. In order to enhance their academic qualifications, PRIMA grantees concentrate their activities fully on the research funded under the grant.

⁴ If a PRIMA grantee is appointed to a professorship at a higher education institution in Switzerland before the grant expires, she may take all remaining PRIMA funds with her. PRIMA grantees are thus attractive candidates for the higher education institutions.

¹ PRIMA; **P**romoting **W**omen in **A**cademia

² http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_reglement_16_e.pdf

Article 2 Applicable law

Subject to any specific provisions in these Regulations, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations apply³.

Article 3 Duration and type of funding

¹ A PRIMA grant covers the grantee's salary and the funds needed to conduct the project.

² It is generally awarded for a period of five years, with the minimum duration being three years.

³ Once a PRIMA grant has been started, a maximum extension of one year may be requested for the following reasons:

- a. maternity or adoption leave;
- b. work incapacity of more than two months due to illness or accident;
- c. services that benefit the general public.

Article 4 Transfer of the PRIMA grant

Should a grantee be appointed to a professorship at a higher education institution in Switzerland during the funding period of the PRIMA grant, the remaining funds from the grant may be transferred to the new position. In this context, funds financing the salary are converted into project funds, which must be used within five years of the grantee's starting in her new role. The SNSF may issue corresponding requirements.

2. Personal and formal requirements

Article 5 General personal requirements

Proposals for PRIMA grants may be submitted by women researchers from all disciplines who fulfill the following conditions:

- a. They meet the general requirements for applicants pursuant to the Funding Regulations and the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations.
- b. Professors in permanent or temporary employment with or without tenure track are not eligible for PRIMA grants.
- c. They have a doctoral degree (PhD) or have completed their studies in human, dental or veterinary medicine (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam, hereinafter "medical exam"). Also admitted are applicants without a doctorate (PhD) or a medical exam who can demonstrate the completion of a minimum of three years of a primary research activity since obtaining their higher education degree. Such research activity will be regarded as an equivalent qualification to a doctorate.
- d. They submit an application within an eight-year window, which starts two years after the doctoral degree or the equivalent qualification. The date of the exam or thesis defense is decisive. The expiry date of the time window is calculated based on the relevant submission deadline for PRIMA applications.
- e. Applicants are engaged in research activities for at least 24 months after the doctorate or the equivalent qualification to a doctorate.

³ <http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/snsf-general-implementation-regulations-for-the-funding-regulations-e.pdf>

- f. They plan to make an academic stay at another host institution during the PRIMA grant if no change of location took place after the doctorate or the equivalent qualification to a doctorate.
- g. Applicants who have completed their medical exam and have done clinical work for at least three years (specialist certification by the FMH is an advantage) and research activities for at least 2 years after completing their exam may submit an application no later than 14 years after completion of the medical exam.
- h. The time windows, cited in letters d and g, may be extended if one or more of the reasons set out in Clause 1.11 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations apply. The reasons for extending the window must be outlined in the application.

Article 6 Other personal requirements

¹ Applicants must have an excellent track record in their research field and provide evidence of their ability to conduct the proposed research project independently.

² Applicants must be prepared to carry out their research activities on a full-time basis (100%). In justified cases the work-time percentage may be reduced, but should never or only for short periods fall below 80%.

³ A work-time percentage under 100% may be requested for the following reasons:

- a. family care duties or
- b. activities that serve to enhance the applicant's qualification for an academic career (e.g. lecturing assignment, training and continuing education in their field).

⁴ Changes in the work-time percentage for the aforementioned reasons can also be made during the funding period of a PRIMA grant. Such changes must be approved by the SNSF.

⁵ Clinical researchers may after the first two years of the grant reduce the research activities to 50% of their work time to increase the clinical activities. A corresponding request giving reasons and explaining the actual situation may be submitted already at the application stage or during the funding period.

Article 7 Formal requirements

¹ Applications for PRIMA grants must be submitted to the SNSF electronically.

² The submission deadlines are published on the SNSF website.

³ All formal requirements for the submission of applications also apply, in particular the Funding Regulations of the SNSF and its General Implementation Regulations.

3. Applications and eligible costs

Article 8 Applications

¹ Applications for PRIMA grants must be submitted in accordance with the requirements issued by the SNSF and must include all the necessary information and documents.

² Applicants describe in a career plan briefly their past career achievements and the objectives they intend to pursue under the PRIMA grant. In particular, they must explain how a PRIMA grant would increase their chances of being appointed to a professorship.

³ The mandatory documents include, in particular, the written confirmations according to SNSF requirements signed by the contact person listed in the application, the head of the institute/departement as well as the competent hierarchical authority for research at the research institution (Vice Rector for research or similar) stating that it will support the applicant and the research project in the following areas:

- a. integration of the grantee at the research institution;
- b. provision of a workplace and access to the research infrastructure;
- c. assumption of an appropriate share of the research costs by the institution;
- d. ensuring supervision of doctoral students employed in the project, where applicable;
- e. statement confirming the independence of the project and the research autonomy of the grantee as well as her career prospects.

⁴ For clinical researchers, the research institution must confirm in writing that the grantee can devote at least 80% of work-time percentage for the first two years of the grant and at least 50% of work-time percentage for the last three years of the grant to the project and to her own further training.

Article 9 Mobility

¹ A PRIMA grant may involve different kinds of mobility:

- a. stay at a non-commercial research institution (host institution) in Switzerland or abroad;
- b. stay at an institution within the relevant field of application (industry, administration, etc.; intersectoral mobility) in Switzerland or abroad;
- c. other forms of mobility, such as short stays or international collaborations.

² Mobility aims at enhancing the scientific profile of researchers and increasing their chances of obtaining an academic position.

³ Stays at a host institution pursuant to paragraph 1 may not exceed 24 months in total; they may be spent at more than one institution and split into a number of shorter periods. If the duration of the PRIMA grant is less than five years, the maximum amount of time that may be spent at host institutions will be reduced proportionately.

⁴ If the research location has not been changed since the doctoral degree or the equivalent qualification to a doctoral degree, applicants must plan a stay at a host institution pursuant to paragraph 1. Otherwise, a stay at a host institution can be applied for when submitting the application or during the funding period of the grant, within the scope of the approved budget.

⁵ Each request for a stay at a host institution must be accompanied by a letter of invitation from the relevant host institution that confirms fulfilment of the requirements set out in Article 8 paragraph 2 letters a and b for the duration of the stay.

Article 10 Eligible costs: salary

¹ A PRIMA grant covers the grantee's salary including social security contributions. The SNSF determines the salary in agreement with the research institution and its salary scales for similar qualifications.

² The SNSF may set an upper limit for the salary.

³ In the event of the PRIMA grant being extended pursuant to Article 3 paragraph 3, the duration and amount of the continued salary payments will be defined in accordance with the provisions

set out in the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations, namely in Clauses 7.10 to 7.12.

Article 11 Eligible project funds

In addition to the grantee's salary, the project funds listed below are eligible. These costs must not exceed CHF 750,000 for the five-year grant. If the duration of the PRIMA grant is less than five years, this maximum amount is reduced proportionately.

Eligible costs are:

- a. salaries of employees whose positions are approved by the SNSF;
- b. material costs directly related to the approved project, namely material of enduring value, consumables, field expenses, travel expenses, third-party charges, cost of computing time and data as well as of providing open access to research data;
- c. direct costs of the use of infrastructure for carrying out the research project;
- d. costs for the organisation of conferences and workshops in connection with the funded research;
- e. costs for national and international cooperation and networking activities in connection with the funded research;
- f. costs for career promotion;
- g. costs for gender-equality measures;
- h. costs for the grantee's mobility;

Article 12 Employment of staff

¹ PRIMA grantees may employ their own staff. The provisions set out in Clause 7 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations apply.

² For requested doctoral positions, the responsible office at the institution must guarantee supervision and completion of the dissertation as planned, in particular in the event of an early termination of the grantee's employment.

4. Submission of applications and other grants of the SNSF: restrictions

Article 13 PRIMA grants in relation to other forms of funding offered by the SNSF

¹ Proposals may only be submitted for a duration of support for which no further

- a. project grants have been applied for or approved, and none are currently ongoing under the project funding scheme, Sinergia or programmes of the SNSF;
- b. career grants of the SNSF have been applied for.

The restrictions apply during the entire evaluation process.⁴

² Parallel submissions for the Postdoc.Mobility scheme are limited to applications for a return grant.

³ In the event of an inadmissible parallel submission, the proposal will not be considered by the SNSF.

⁴ Editorial amendment of 1 September 2018, in force with immediate effect.

⁴ As of the approval date and for the entire duration of the PRIMA grant, no other applications under the project funding scheme, Sinergia or programmes of the SNSF may be submitted. However, it is permissible to submit applications for funding after expiry of the PRIMA grant.

⁵ Grantees may not apply for any further career grants of the SNSF. As an exception, grantees may apply for an Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship 18 months after starting their PRIMA grant at the earliest. If an Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship is awarded, the PRIMA grant will lapse at the start of the professorship, and the grantee will be obliged to refund the money already transferred but not yet spent to the SNSF.

Article 14 Repeated submissions: limitation

Applicants whose application has been rejected may apply only once more for a PRIMA grant, regardless of the subject matter of the project.

5. Assessment criteria and procedure

Article 15 Assessment criteria

¹ Applications that meet the personal and formal requirements are evaluated scientifically.

² The following main criteria are applied:

- a. the applicant's aptitude and motivation for an academic or academic-clinical career, particularly regarding an appointment to a professorship; and
- b. the scientific relevance, originality and topicality of the research project, particularly in respect of innovative research aims outside the "mainstream".

³ Further the following assessment criteria are applied:

- a. the applicant's scientific track record;
- b. the applicant's career progression and retrospective and prospective mobility;
- c. scientific independence of the applicant at the chosen research institution and of the research project;
- d. guarantee of support from the research institution and assurance that the applicant's career will be promoted;
- e. approach and methodology of the research project as well as its feasibility and chances of success;
- f. suitability of the research institution as a place to conduct the research project;
- g. if applicable, the value added to the applicant's career and to the research project by the requested mobility.

Article 16 Evaluation procedure and decision

¹ The evaluation procedure comprises two phases. Phase 1 consists of a preselection of applicants for admission to phase 2. Applicants who do not qualify for phase 2 are informed about their rejection and the reasons for it in a ruling.

² In phase 2, the applicants are invited for a personal interview. In certain circumstances (e.g. long travelling distance), the interview may be held as a video conference.

³ At the interview, the applicants are expected to present their research project and career plans verbally and answer the questions of the panel members.

⁴ The decisions made in phase 2 are communicated to the applicants in a ruling.

6. Grants and grant administration

Article 17 Grants, start of grants and amendments

¹ PRIMA grants are awarded, transferred and managed according to the rules issued by the SNSF, in particular the provisions of the Funding Regulations and its General Implementation Regulations.

² PRIMA grants may generally be started ten months after the submission deadline at the earliest. The earliest possible start of funding is announced in the relevant call.

³ Any changes intended to be made to the described research work and conditions, particularly with regard to the research institution, must be reported to the SNSF in advance. The SNSF may approve a request for changes to a grant if valid reasons are cited in the change request.

Article 18 Non-acceptance or premature termination

If grantees forego the PRIMA grant or have to terminate their research work prematurely, they must notify the SNSF without delay in writing, stating their reasons for doing so. The remaining amount of the grant must be refunded to the SNSF.

Article 19 Reporting

¹ Grantees are obliged to send the SNSF periodic reports in accordance with the requirements defined by the SNSF.

² In particular, scientific and financial reports as well as output data must be submitted annually after the start of the project.

³ The duty to provide output data will remain in place after submission of the final report and will end three years after the expiry of the grant.

7. Entry into force and repeal of existing regulations

Article 20 Entry into force

These Regulations enter into force on 1 August 2017.

Article 21 Repeal of existing regulations

The Regulations on Marie Heim-Vögtlin grants of 12 December 2007 are repealed as of 25 January 2017. The grants approved under the repealed regulations and the corresponding rights and obligations remain in force. In particular, applications for contributions towards childcare, conference and research costs as well as follow-up applications may be submitted based on the ongoing grants.