FNSNF
SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Updated version will be published when the call opens

SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships 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 application. The SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship covers the salary of the grantee and project funds for five years. For questions on eligibility and other concerns, please always refer to the "Regulations on SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships" (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 *my*SNF 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 *my*SNF. Section 3 also contains mandatory formal requirements for documents. 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 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 important information:

- Project window: For a submission on 1 February 2021, the earliest possible starting date is 1 January 2022. The start of the SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship can be postponed by no more than 12 months after the earliest possible starting date.

- Time window: The precise period of eligibility extends from 3 to 8 years after the date of the PhD defence or the equivalent to a PhD or up to 12 years after the medical degree. The Eccellenza submission deadline must fall into this period. An extension of this window is possible for the reasons stated in Article 1.11 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations. For the detailed personal requirements, 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.

- Research institution: Make sure that you contact the research institution in time in order to secure their support for your application (see also 3n.).

- 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 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 evaluation commission but is not forwarded to external reviewers. **The research plan forms the basis of the scientific evaluation in phase 2**, and it is during this phase that applications are peer-reviewed. The research plan is not part of the evaluation in 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 by mid of July and receive the official decision by the end of August. Applicants selected for phase 2 are invited to an interview, held in September 2021, to present their research project and career plan. These applicants will be informed about the final decision by the end of November at latest. The SNSF subjects all applications to a stringent scientific evaluation procedure and rates them based on pre-defined criteria at its due discretion. Based on assessments by referees and co-referees and the comparison and discussion of applications by the evaluation body, a small share of applications may emerge that are of equal quality and equally worthy of funding. As no further differentiation is possible, decisions for this group of applications will be reached by drawing lots according to Article 23 paragraph 5 of the <u>Organisational Regulations of the National Research Council</u>. Applicants affected by this procedure are informed accordingly in the decision letter. The letter includes a justification for applicants who are excluded as a result of the procedure.

- <u>Eccellenza Professorial Fellowships in relation to other forms of funding offered by the SNSF:</u> Proposals may only be submitted for a duration of support for which no other SNSF grants have been requested. For exceptions see Article 10 of the <u>Eccellenza Regulations.</u>

- <u>Parallel evaluation of an ERC grant:</u> If you are invited for an Eccellenza interview, you will be asked for information in order to compare your Eccellenza and the ERC project. In case your projects significantly overlap and if you have been or will be awarded a grant from the ERC, the funding granted by the SNSF will be limited to your salary (see <u>FAQs</u> as well as Article 9 paragraph 5 of the <u>Eccellenza Regulations</u>).

- According to the <u>San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)</u> signed by the SNSF, applications are evaluated based on the quality of past and ongoing research activities, not on the opinion of mentors, supervisors or collaborators. Consequently, the submission of support letters is not accepted. **All support letters, either uploaded on mySNF or forwarded to the SNSF, will be discarded.** Only letters from collaborations underpinning the feasibility of the project are accepted under "Other annexes".

- <u>Re-submission:</u> You may reapply once for an SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship (Article 11 of the <u>Eccellenza Regulations</u>). If your application is a revised version of the rejected application, 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 twice: once alongside the extended synopsis (for the evaluation phase 1) and once alongside the research plan (for the evaluation phase 2). It must be written in the same language and cannot exceed one page (minimum font size: 10 points).

2. Creating and submitting a grant application on *my*SNF

Applicants without an account have to register as users on [*my*SNF](#). It may take several days to process your request for a *my*SNF account. Please make sure to select the correct division and funding instrument (Careers/Eccellenza). 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 *my*SNF no later than 17:00 CET (Swiss local time) on the submission date (Monday, 1 February 2021). 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 *my*SNF

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

3a. General Information

The SNSF has signed the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)](#), which recommends funders to be explicit about the criteria used in evaluating the scientific productivity of applicants. The scientific quality, value and impact of the entire research output is taken into consideration (including datasets, software, and prototypes) in addition to research publications. 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 its evaluation procedure, the SNSF takes into account the scientific discipline, net academic age and personal situation (e.g. career breaks, child care duties).

In order to comply with DORA, the SNSF requests a standardised set of information from all applicants.

3b. 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.

3c. Use-inspired project

Tick this box only if your application is ["use-inspired"](#). 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.

3d. Requested funding

An Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship covers the salary of the applicant and the project funds (Article 9 of the [Eccellenza Regulations](#)).

The salary of the applicant is dependent on the chosen higher education institution. The applicant should therefore contact the HR office for the corresponding salary. For more details see Annex 12 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations. Regarding salaries for researchers doing clinical work, please see the separate information sheet.

The project funds amount to CHF 1,000,000 for five years (in addition to the salary of the applicant). The budget should be as detailed as possible (e.g. separate entries are required for equipment, access costs to infrastructure, consumables, travel, personnel, etc.). Changes to the budget after the application has been submitted are not possible. Project funds cover also the personnel (doctoral students, postdocs, other employees).

3e. 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*SNF 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.

3f. Diplomas: relevant dates of degrees for the eligibility

For applicants with a PhD, the date of the examination or the PhD defence is relevant.

- If 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.
- If your PhD degree did not include an examination or a PhD defence, the relevant date is the one your PhD institution deemed equivalent to having completed the requirements. Please provide a written confirmation from the institution to this effect.

For applicants who have completed their studies in human, dental or veterinary medicine, the date of the medical degree (Staatsexamen or equivalent exam) is relevant.

For applicants without a PhD or a medical degree the date of the equivalent to a PhD is relevant. The date of the equivalence is reached after three years of research work since the higher education degree.

3g. Extended synopsis (5 pages, basis for the evaluation in phase 1)

The extended synopsis outlines the research planned by the applicant and the personnel in sufficient detail to allow for a scientific evaluation of the project according to the criteria described in Article 12 of the Eccellenza Regulations. It is important that this extended synopsis contains all essential information, including an outline of the scientific work plan, since **during phase 1 of the evaluation the panel will only evaluate the extended synopsis, not the research plan**. 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.

3h. Research plan (20 pages, evaluated in phase 2 only)

The research plan provides the basis for the scientific evaluation of the project according to the criteria described in Article 12 of the [Eccellenza Regulations](#). The research plan must be formulated as a stand-alone document. External reviewers will not have access to the extended synopsis described in 3g 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 twenty 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.

The single file uploaded as "research plan" needs to contain all of the following elements:

1. Summary	In the summary (ca. 1 page, <u>included in the limit of 20 pages and 80,000 characters[1]</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 *my*SNF.
2. Research Plan **2.1 Current state of research in the field**	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.

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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**

2.2 Current state of personal research	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.
2.3 Detailed research plan	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 *my*SNF.
2.4 Schedule and milestones	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.
2.5 Relevance and impact	**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?
3. Bibliography	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>

3i. CV and major scientific achievements

The CV and the statement of major scientific achievements must be written in the same language as the research plan. The CV section must not exceed 3 pages (minimum font size 10 points) and must be structured as follows. All dates must 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:
- For applicants with a PhD: mention the date of your PhD defence and the name of the PhD advisor/s.

- For applicants who have completed their studies in human, dental or veterinary medicine: mention the date of the medical degree (Staatsexamen or equivalent) and the name of advisor/s
- For applicants without a PhD or a medical degree: mention the date of the equivalent to a PhD which equals to three years of research work since the higher education degree and the name of advisor/s.
- Expose the status of your Habilitation, if applicable.

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 in addition to the CV, minimum font size 10 points), emphasize your most important scientific achievements. Describe for each achievement your specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

The CV and the major scientific achievements must be assembled and uploaded to mySNF as one document (**maximum 4 pages total**).

3j. 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.

3k. Research output list

Your research output is evaluated in the context of your net academic age and takes into account your CV and major scientific achievements. Journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors are not appropriate surrogates to evaluate the quality of your research output. Therefore, do not indicate journal-based metrics in your application. Your research output is evaluated based on defined criteria, namely:

- Scientific quality of your research output
- Research output at all career stages
- Productivity
- Scientific independence
- Impact in the field
- Expertise required for the submitted proposal

Members of the evaluation commission and external peer reviewers may support their expert judgement for your productivity or your impact in the field with article counts or number of

citations, respectively. All aspects are also taken into account in the evaluation of the feasibility of the proposed research project.

Separate your research output resulting from your PhD/medical degree (or prior) and from your postdoctoral time and highlight the 5 most important. For all research output listed from your postdoctoral time, give a very short comment on your contribution.

The applicant's name in the list of authors and the research output 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. Authors must always be listed in the same order as in the research output 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.

Applicants in Humanities and Social Sciences who are pursuing a Habilitation must expose the status of their monograph: published or submitted (under the corresponding categories 2, for published or 11 for submitted, see below; if still in preparation, only refer to it in your CV and/or career plan). Please specify when the publication is expected and, if applicable, upload the 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). Ensure that all numbered 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. 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, contributions to big data collaborations, etc.)
10. Preprints available on a field-specific server (e.g. arXiv, bioRxiv, EarthArXiv, etc.).
11. Submitted manuscripts/monographs that are not accessible: specify the journal/publisher where it has been submitted and upload the proof of submission, as well as the file in the container "Other annexes". Please do not upload any other (un-)published work, for it will be deleted without being considered.

3I. Net academic age

The applicant's previous scientific achievements are assessed in relation to the applicant's net academic age. The net academic age is defined as the period from the date of the PhD defence or equivalent qualification or from the medical degree until the submission deadline, minus all non-academic activities, calculated in full-time equivalents (FTE).

The net academic age and detailed information including non-academic activities must be listed in the form provided. The following non-academic activities can be listed: maternity, paternity,

adoption or parental leave; inability to work due to illness or accident; care duties; services that benefit the general public, particularly military or civilian service; continuing education; non-academic employments (e.g. industry, government) or clinical activity; unemployment; other (please specify). For each non-academic activity, please provide a brief description and specify the time period (from - to) as well as the duration in FTE. All entries must also be visible in the CV.

3m.   Statement of mobility

Mobility is recognised as a necessary aspect for a successful scientific or academic career. As stated in Article 8 of the Eccellenza Regulations, applicants who did not conduct a research stay of 24 months at other institutions than the one where he/she obtained the relevant degree (PhD or equivalent or medical degree) will have the possibility to perform their mobility during the funded period. In order to assess the applicant's past and planned mobility concept, a statement of mobility is required.

The concept of academic mobility encompasses five dimensions, taking into account alternative career paths:

1. Institutional: collaborations with or move to an institution that provides the infrastructure and expertise beneficial to your career as a researcher. Show the added value to your career trajectory so far and to the proposed research.

In particular for the following cases, the choice of the research institution where the SNSF Professorial Fellowship will be hosted 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 degree.
- The applicant would like to join the higher education institution of his/her PhD advisor.

2. International: describe the lasting effects of a stay abroad (incl. several short-term stays over a certain time period), international collaborations and your involvement in international networks.

3. Sectorial: experience in the private sector or other areas offering practical experience valuable for the proposed research, notably in applied research, according to the career goal in this area.

4. Disciplinary: move across research fields different from your core discipline.

5. Intellectual: sharing of your knowledge beyond academia (e.g. science communicator, contributions to the standing of science in society, translation into practice).

Using the form provided, please comment on each of these dimensions where applicable, and consider the following points:
- Address all dimensions prospectively and retrospectively.
- Your statement can, but does not have to contain information for all dimensions.
- To guarantee fair and equal treatment, a statement will be required by all applicants, meaning that also applicants fulfilling physical mobility expectations by the submission deadline will have to comment on their academic mobility.

- If it was not possible to perform physical mobility before the submission deadline, please comment on the reasons why and elaborate on the measures you will take in order to close the gap.
- Comment on the choice of your research institution with regard to its suitability to provide scientific support for your project as well as the possibilities to develop your intellectual background and your scientific independence.
- Explain how your mobility will contribute to meet your career goals.

The applicant's mobility will be assessed based on the statement provided. The mobility performed by the end of the grant will be assessed regarding the aim of Eccellenza and regarding the applicant's personal career goal. The statement will be rated on the background of the research plan, the CV, the choice of the research institution and the career plan.

3n. Confirmation of 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 in particular stated in Article 7 of the [Eccellenza Regulations](#).
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.

All 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](#).

Berne, April 2021