

# Annex 12: Salary ranges, guidelines for employees in SNSF-funded projects and blankets amounts for social security contributions<sup>1</sup>

Clause 7.1 et seq. General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations, Version of 19 March 2025

## Introductory comments

There are three categories of employees in SNSF-funded projects: "doctoral students", "postdocs" and "other employees". This categorisation is based on the employee's official status in the project. This status must be clearly communicated to the SNSF. Doctoral students cannot be employed as "other employees".

The SNSF's commitment to promoting young researchers is an important part of its research funding mandate. Accordingly SNSF-funded employees should not remain in the categories "doctoral students" and "postdocs" over a long period.

The target for **doctoral students** is to complete their dissertation in good time. Experience has shown that, in order to achieve this goal, doctoral students need to devote 80-100% of a full-time equivalent position (FTE) to their dissertation (Clause 7.3 paragraph 3 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations). Devoting less than 80% of an FTE to the dissertation is only permissible if the following requirements are cumulatively met: a. The doctoral thesis can be completed over the regular four-year period; b. It is the doctoral student's own choice to spend less time on the doctoral thesis; c. Completion of the project is not jeopardised in any way. The maximum funding period is four years.

For **postdocs**, the goal is to become scientifically independent as soon as possible so that they can compete internationally and optimise their academic career prospects. The maximum funding period is five years.

The aim in employing **other employees** is to ensure that each project is adequately staffed with qualified people for specific tasks.

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<sup>1</sup> Wording based on the Research Council decision of 24 September 2019, in force since 2 October 2019.

## 12.1 Salary range for doctoral students

The following salary range comprises an annual gross salary, excluding social security contributions by the employer. Salaries must not fall below the minimum of the salary range for doctoral students regardless of their work-time percentage. If the salary is financed through different sources, the sum total must not be lower than the minimum salary.

Doctoral students CHF 47,040 to 55,000<sup>2</sup>

The maximum period of employment for doctoral students funded by the SNSF is four years. The other conditions applicable to doctoral students must be complied with, particularly Clauses 7.3 and 7.6 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations.

## 12.2 Salary ranges for postdocs and other employees

The following salary ranges are annual gross salaries, excluding social security contributions by the employer, calculated on a full-time basis. For employees on shorter working weeks, the amounts must be reduced accordingly:

Postdocs CHF 80,000 to 110,000<sup>3</sup>

other employees (see rules below):  
Minimum of CHF 40,000;  
Maximum acc. to institution's salary guideline

The "Other employees" category consists of employees with a degree who do not intend to do a doctorate; employees with a doctorate who do not meet the requirements for the postdoc category with regard to employment duration and time window; technicians; auxiliary staff.

## 12.3 General rules<sup>4</sup>

The following general rules apply to the employment of personnel under an SNSF grant:

- Within the stated salary ranges, institutions may apply their usual salary standards. The SNSF reserves the right to lower any disproportionately high salaries specified by individual institutions for other employees.
- Institutions are responsible for ensuring salary equality within their institutions.
- Employees' work-time percentages, if charged to the grant, must correspond to the actual time spent working on the project.
- Other employees' salaries can only be covered by an SNSF grant if they make a specific contribution to the proposed project. It is not possible to apply for career grants for other employees.

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<sup>2</sup> Amended by the decision of the Presiding Board of the Research Council of 19 April 2024, with retroactive effect as of 1 January 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Amended by the decision of the Presiding Board of the Research Council of 19 April 2024, with retroactive effect as of 1 January 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Amended based on the decision of the Academic Board of the Research Council of 25 February 2025, in force since 1 April 2025.

- Postdoc positions that are still vacant (NN positions) may be budgeted only at the middle rate of the relevant salary range. For positions for other employees that are still vacant (NN positions), the relevant role must be justified and the salary budgeted proportionately. NN positions for doctoral students may be entered in the budget with annual adjustments (salary for first to fourth year) if the relevant salary range is respected. Positions with an annual gross salary of less than CHF 5,000 do not fall under the reportable personnel changes.
- The salaries charged to the grant may not be higher than the salaries actually paid and may therefore not include any additional costs such as, for instance, overhead costs.
- The SNSF approves positions for doctoral students at universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education where there is a well-documented scientific cooperation with a university in Switzerland.
- As a rule, the SNSF does not approve positions for doctoral students who are registered and/or employed abroad. Exceptions can be granted if:
  - Doctoral students are employed in research areas covered by universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education in which it is not possible to obtain a doctorate with a Swiss university.
  - Doctoral students are employed in collaborative project funding projects (excluding WEAVE and Lead Agency), and their employ is the research institution of the grantee abroad.

## 12.4 Adjustments to salary ranges

The regular review of the salary ranges is delegated to the SNSF Administrative Offices. They shall have the final say in adjustments up to the level of any general increase in salaries that has occurred since the previous adjustment. However, there is no mandatory requirement to match such general increases. Higher adjustments shall be decided by the Academic Board of the Research Council<sup>5</sup>. Adjustments will generally enter into force on 1 January and will be communicated to the institutions in advance.

## 12.5 Lump sums for social security contributions

For employees remunerated via an SNSF grant, the SNSF pays the grantees in the form of a lump sum the equivalent of the statutory social security contributions payable by employers in accordance with AHVG/IVG/EOG, BVG, AVIG and UVG (Swiss federal acts on social security contributions). This also applies to any family allowances or any other benefits commonly paid locally. In the financial reports, the actual amount incurred for social security contributions must be stated. The lump sums (clause 7.7 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations) for the employer's share in the social security contributions (as percentages of the relevant total gross salary) are:

University of Basel	14%
University of Bern	15%
EPFL	16%
ETHZ	16%

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<sup>5</sup> Amended based on the decision of the Academic Board of the Research Council of 19 March 2025, in force since 1 April 2025.

EAWAG, EMPA, PSI, WSL	16%
University of Fribourg	19%
University of Geneva (incl. IHEID)	23%
University Lausanne (incl. CHUV)	16%
University of Lugano	14%
University of Lucerne	16%
University of Neuchâtel	23%
University of St. Gallen	14%
University of Zurich	15%
Other institutions, usually	16%