

Confirmation of the higher education institution

Switzerland is currently considered a non-associated third country for participation in Horizon Europe and other related programmes. For monobeneficiary schemes such as most ERC grants, researchers at Swiss research institutions are not eligible to apply. To remedy this situation, the SNSF has been mandated by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) to offer an alternative, comparable call for proposals as part of its broader transitional measures in 2021-2022: the SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022. This is an integrative call which, in addition to the transitional measure for the 2022 ERC Starting Grant, also covers the SNSF's 2022 Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship. Thus, conditions of employment of the SNSF Starting Grants are similar to those for researchers who intended to apply for Eccellenza in 2022. International and Swiss-based applicants who intended to apply for an ERC Starting Grant or an SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship to work in Switzerland are welcome to submit an SNSF Starting Grant proposal to the SNSF.

With an SNSF Starting Grant, grantees will lead an independent research project and direct a team of researchers in Switzerland. Applicants can request a budget of up to CHF 1.8 million for a period of five years.

Important: this updated template reflects the following news (clarifications on the requirements regarding the position of SNSF Starting Grant recipients):

<https://www.snf.ch/en/0ZqIH5tNGoAVUwe6/news>

Applicants can submit an SNSF Starting Grant independently of their academic position.

For higher education institutions that offer an assistant professorship, a position and title of assistant professor is required for the duration of the grant.

- If the applicants do not have such a secured position for the duration of the grant, they request their salary at the level of assistant professor. They submit the detailed confirmation (1) by the submission deadline and the general confirmation of the vice rectorate for research (2a) at the latest before the start of the SNSF Starting Grant confirming they will receive the status and title of assistant professor.
- If the applicants have such a secured position for the duration of the grant, they submit the detailed confirmation (1) and the general confirmation of the vice rectorate for research (2b) by the submission deadline.

For eligible institutions that do not offer assistant professor positions and titles, a position involving independent project and management responsibility (“group leader position”) is required for the duration of the grant.

- If the applicants do not have such a secured position for the duration of the grant, they request their full salary at level of group leader. They submit the detailed confirmation (1) by the submission deadline.
- If the applicants have such a secured position for the duration of the grant, they submit the detailed confirmation (1) and the general confirmation of the vice rectorate for research (2b) by the submission deadline.

The written confirmation of the higher education institution consists of two separate letters:

1. Detailed confirmation of the research institution signed by the head of the institute/department. This confirmation must be submitted with the application by the submission deadline (Tuesday 1 February 2022).
2. General confirmation of the vice rectorate for research for higher education institutions that can offer an assistant professorship, or an equivalent position for an institution that does not offer assistant professor positions and titles:
 - a **If the applicant requests her/his full salary at the level of assistant professor to the SNSF Starting Grant:** must be submitted before the start of the SNSF Starting Grant at the latest or can already be submitted with the application by the submission deadline (Tuesday 1 February 2022).
 - b **If the applicant already has a secured position as professor at the higher education institution, or as group leader at the eligible institution that does not offer assistant professor positions and titles:** must be submitted by the submission deadline (Tuesday 1 February 2022).

The confirmation must follow the text template provided below and be written using the official letterhead of the research institution. They will only be regarded as complete if all the points relevant to the application are addressed.

1. Detailed confirmation of the research institution

The **[name research institution]** confirms its intention towards the principal investigator (PI) **[name applicant]** to adhere to the obligations listed below should a SNSF Starting Grant be awarded for the proposal entitled **[project title]**.

For the duration of the SNSF Starting Grant, the research institution commits itself to:

- integrate and engage the PI for the whole duration of the SNSF Starting Grant;
- provide working space for the whole duration of the SNSF Starting Grant;
- support the PI in the management of her/his team and provide administrative assistance to the PI;
- provide research support to the PI and the team members (regarding infrastructure, equipment, access rights, products and other services necessary for conducting the research); **[please specify]**;
- guarantee the necessary scientific independence of the PI, in particular as regards the:
 - realisation of the research under the scientific guidance of the PI;
 - selection and supervision of other team members;
 - use of the budget to achieve the scientific objectives of the project;
 - authority to publish as senior author and to invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work;
 - preparation of scientific reports for the SNSF Starting Grant;
 - possibility to apply independently for funding.

[The following points MUST be addressed]

- Statement on the general interest of the research institution with regard to the PI and her/his research project/field as well as possible synergies.
- Statement on the project and its autonomy compared to other ongoing research objectives at the research institution.
- *If the applicant will not be employed as assistant professor during the SNSF Starting Grant and requests PhD positions(s), the official supervisor of the doctoral thesis at [name institute/department] will be [name]. For the requested PhD position(s) the due completion of the doctoral thesis is guaranteed on expiry of the grant or in the event of the project being prematurely abandoned (including required financing).*

[Name, signature; signed by the head of the institute/department]

2. General confirmation of the vice rectorate for research

The executive board of the **[name of the university or research institution]** supports the application of **[name applicant]** for an SNSF Starting Grant and warrants the necessary conditions for the successful conduct of the research project pursuant to the letter of the **[name institute/department]**.

a If the applicant requests her/his full salary at the level of assistant professor to the SNSF Starting Grant:

[name applicant]'s full salary at the level of a local assistant professor is covered by the SNSF Starting Grant. The **[name of the university or research institution]** commits itself for the duration of the SNSF Starting Grant to:

- guarantee the recipient of the SNSF Starting Grant the status and title of at least an assistant professor.
- guarantee the recipient of the SNSF Starting Grant the right to supervise dissertations (in the case of a higher education institution that awards doctoral degrees).
- inform the PI about job openings in her/his field of competence.
- ensure the possibility to be employed as assistant professor at least at 80% (0.8 FTE)
- ensure the possibility to devote time to the SNSF Starting Grant project (a minimum of 80% of working time, or, at universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education, 70%).
- ensure the possibility of teaching (a maximum of 20% of working time, or, at universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education, 30%).
- *[In case of researchers who do clinical work]* ensure the possibility to be employed to at least 50% (0.5 FTE) as assistant professor, and to devote at least this time on the project covered by this grant and the rest mainly on clinical work.

b If the applicant already has a secured (paid) position as professor at the higher education institution, or as group leader at the eligible institution that does not offer assistant professor positions and titles:

[name of the university or research institution] covers her/his salary, and **[name applicant]** asks only for funds for the research project. The **[name of the university or research institution]** commits itself for the duration of the SNSF Starting Grant to employ the PI to at least 50% (0.5 FTE). The PI spends at least this work-time on the project covered by this grant.

[Name, signature; signed by the vice-rector for research or equivalent]

Bern, 22.12.2021