



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER

Federal Commission for Scholarships  
for Foreign Students FCS

Academic Year  
2018-2019

Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships for Foreign Students  
at Swiss Higher Education Institutions

## Application Guidelines for the Academic Year 2018-2019



**To prepare a successful application:**

Please read carefully and respect these guidelines exactly.

More: [www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships\\_eng](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng)

# Content

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3	<b>About the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships</b>
4	Application procedure
5	Preconditions
7	<b>Scholarship types</b>
9	Duration of scholarships
10	<b>Selection criteria</b>
11	Study location
12	Obligations
13	Financial matters
15	<b>Preparing your application</b>
20	<b>Finding your supervisor</b>
21	Exclusion criteria

In case of doubt the scholarship offer for your country of origin is decisive.  
For further information see: [www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships\\_eng](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng)

# About the ...

## Postgraduate scholarships

### Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships

Through the Swiss Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS aka ESKAS, CFBE), the Swiss Government grants foreign researchers postgraduate scholarships at Swiss higher education institutions (Universities, Federal Institutes of Technology and Universities of Applied Sciences, Fine Arts and Music Schools).

The Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are intended for highly motivated, competitive young researchers who have graduated from university (postgraduates). These scholarships will enable applicants to undertake research work in the fields in which the Swiss universities are particularly active.

## Read the FCS webpage

For each country specific scholarship types are offered. Please go to the FCS webpage in order to see **which type of scholarship is offered to your country of origin.**

Click FCS website: [www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships\\_eng](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng)

## Submit in your country of origin

**Your country of origin is decisive for your application.** The applications have to be submitted for a preliminary selection to the national institution in charge and/or to the Swiss diplomatic representation in the applicant's country of origin. The Swiss diplomatic representation will then forward the pre-selected applications to the FCS for final selection. In case your current country of residence is not your country of origin please get in contact with the Swiss diplomatic representation in your country of residence.

# Application procedure

All year round

## Entry Points

The Swiss diplomatic representation in the country of origin of the applicant are the entry point for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships.

In August

## Release

Detailed information about the scholarship types available for your country, the eligibility criteria and the deadlines are online. Click FCS website: [www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships\\_eng](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng)

September, October,  
November

## Call for proposals

Get your application package from the Swiss diplomatic representation and prepare your dossier.

Check for your  
country

## Submission deadline

The date for submission of the application varies from country to country. Please check on the FCS website.

Before end of May

## Selection

The results of the selection by the Federal Commission for Scholarships will be communicated at latest until the end of May.

In September

## Start of scholarship

# Preconditions

## Research interest

### Research proposal

Applicants must have a clear research goal. Research fellowship, Post-doctoral scholarship as well as PhD scholarship candidates have to submit a complete research proposal (max. 5 pages, signed), **using exclusively the FCS research proposal form** provided with the application package. **The research proposal is a central part of your application.** Please devote all the required attention to it and **submit only a signed document.**

## Two separate procedures for PhD scholarship applications

### For PhD applicants only – Please note!

The FCS application for a PhD scholarship and the application for admission by a Swiss university for a PhD study are two separate procedures. The admission to a PhD study at your chosen Swiss university is a *conditio sine qua non* for a potential attribution of a FCS scholarship – but not guarantee though for a positive decision by the Federal Commission for Scholarships FCS. It is the applicant's responsibility to manage both procedures in parallel.

## Structured doctoral school applicants

In those cases where the PhD is run within a structured doctoral school\* applicants must provide included in their application an admission letter or the proof that they are being considered for admission. Without such a document the application will be rejected.

For EPFL doctoral school candidates\*: The admission letter from the EPFL doctoral school is required. As this takes time applicants must plan accordingly and submit their application for admission to the doctoral school sufficiently in advance of the scholarship programme deadline.

\* A support letter from a host professor is required in any case additionally.

# Preconditions

## **Academic supervisor aka host professor**

### **Academic supervisor**

To have an eligible application package, each applicant wishing to undertake a research, PhD or a Post-doctoral scholarship must find a host professor in Switzerland willing to support and entitled to supervise their scholarship research project or PhD project.

A letter of invitation must imperatively be part of the application package.

**Failure to have an academic supervisor will result in the rejection of the application** by the relevant national institution in the host country or by the Swiss diplomatic representation. An application without a host professor is not complete and will therefore be rejected.

## **Before contacting a host professor**

### **Prepare yourself well before contacting a prospective host professor**

Make sure that the prospective academic supervisor actually works in your field.

Be specific and furthermore make sure that you possess all of the competences required for the intended scientific collaboration. Find out, for instance, what requirements must be met in order to obtain a Master's degree at the university in question before contacting professors.

Note: Many professors receive numerous requests. Finding a professor who is willing to supervise you can be a major challenge. It can take several weeks or even months.

# Scholarship types

**Go to the [FCS](#) webpage in order to see which type of scholarship is offered to your country of origin**

**Postgraduate scholarships**

## **Research Fellowship (12 months)**

Intended for highly qualified postgraduate researchers from all academic fields.

- Master degree or equivalent achieved before 31 August 2018
- Date of birth after 31 December 1982
- A copy of the letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the research.
- Research proposal including time frame

## **PhD Scholarship (12 months up to 36 months)**

Intended for highly qualified PhD students from all academic fields.

- Master degree or equivalent achieved before 31 August 2018
- Date of birth after 31 December 1982
- A copy of the letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the PhD thesis.  
For PhD scholarships at doctoral schools:  
A proof that the applicant is being considered for admission. Except EPFL: accepted admission required.
- Admission to the PhD studies by the academic host institution
- Research proposal including time frame

# Scholarship types

## Postgraduate scholarships

### Post-doctoral Scholarship (12 months)

Intended for highly qualified post-doctoral researchers at the beginning of their academic career from all academic fields.

- PhD degree achieved after 31 December 2014 and before 31 August 2018
- Not more than 3 years after the award of the PhD. No funding for sabbaticals.
- A copy of the letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the post-doctoral research.
- Research proposal including time frame

## Master scholarships

### Fine Arts Scholarship (12 months up to 21 months at most)

Intended for highly qualified fine art students from all artistic fields wishing to pursue an initial master's degree.

- Bachelor degree or equivalent achieved before 31 August 2018
- Date of birth after 31 December 1982
- A proof for «admission is under consideration» at the intended Swiss fine arts or music school (conservatory). This may be in the form of a conditional acceptance pending an entry exam or other specific requirements. If applicable: a copy of the letter from a professor confirming the supervision of the studies.

## List of eligible countries

This type of scholarship is available for the following countries only:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, United States of America



# Duration of scholarships

## All scholarships start in September

It is not possible to start the scholarship in the Spring semester or any other time in the year.

### Not extendable

#### Research Fellowship

12 months (September – August) – no extension possible

Grant applications for stays lasting less than 9 months will not be treated as a priority.

Grant applications for stays lasting less than 6 months will be rejected.

### Extendable

#### PhD Scholarship

36 months **at most** (September – August)

The PhD scholarships can be **extended** based on the achieved academic results. It is the concerned grant holder's and the supervisor's responsibility to find sufficient funding beyond the maximal duration of the PhD scholarship (36 month) if it turns out to be necessary to end the doctorate.

### Not extendable

#### Post-doctoral Scholarship

12 months (September – August) – no extension possible

Grant applications for stays lasting less than 9 months will not be treated as a priority.

Grant applications for stays lasting less than 6 months will be rejected

### Extendable

#### Fine Arts Scholarships

12 months (September – August) up to 21 months (January or May) **at most** depending on the Master program chosen and the ECTS credits necessary

# Selection criteria

## Important selection criteria

### The 3 dimensions of selection criteria

The Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are highly competitive. The following aspects of the application are considered mainly:

#### 1) The candidate

The academic profile, the research capacity and motivation.

#### 2) The research proposal

Its originality and methodological soundness.

#### 3) The academic context

The quality and context of supervision and the potential for future academic cooperation.

## Strengthening cooperation

### Longterm perspective

Candidates submitting their applications within the framework of a cooperation program between their academic home institution, where they are at the moment and/or where they accomplished their education, and the Swiss university/institute have a certain priority.

# Study location

## Eligible host institutions

### Swiss public academic institutions

The Swiss Government Scholarships are granted for research in one of the Swiss public universities, Federal Institutes of Technology, University of Applied Sciences or Schools of music and fine arts. The fine arts and music scholarships are granted for studies in the public music academies, as well as art and design schools.

## Useful weblinks

Information on the universities, programs, and professors can be obtained on the internet sites of the Swiss academic institutions, and the portal [swissuniversities](#).

## Full-time research only

The scholarship is valid only for full-time research in Switzerland. It is not valid for on-the-job studies, part-time studies, correspondence courses or mixed programs (part time in Switzerland and part time in another country). During their scholarship grant holders are resident in Switzerland.

## Field work

The scholarship is meant for conducting research in the Swiss host institution. For Research as well as Post-doctoral scholarships there is no financial support possible for fieldwork by FCS. Special conditions apply for PhD students pursuing their PhD at a Swiss University and working in an academic field where fieldwork is indispensable. A supplementary allowance may be requested. For fieldtrips lasting longer than 2 months the scholarship amount will be reduced to 50%.

## At max 12 months in Switzerland before start

### Coming to Switzerland

This scholarship primarily offers an opportunity to scholars who have not already been to Switzerland. Therefore scholarship applicants who are in Switzerland since more than 1 year at the beginning of the scholarship (enclose your Permis B) will not be taken into account by the Swiss diplomatic representation.

# Obligations

## **Living in Switzerland**

### **Place of residence**

Swiss Government Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period. The scholarship holders must be resident preferably in the city (in Switzerland) or in the Canton of their research/study institution. They must comply with the FCS instructions, regulations concerning the residence for foreigners in Switzerland and with the university/art institution regulations.

## **No family allowances**

### **Family and children**

The FCS does not have the authority to decide on the possibility of bringing the family of the scholarship holder to Switzerland. This is left to the Federal and Cantonal Migration Offices, which at present deal with requests very restrictively. The scholarship amount covers the living costs of one person only. There are no additional family allowances.

## **Notifying FCS about other grants and other forms of financial support**

### **Other grants**

If you are awarded another additional scholarship or you receive other forms of financial support (such as income from teaching and research assistance, etc.) you are asked to notify the Federal Commission for Scholarships.

# Financial matters

	<b>Scholarship amount</b>
<b>Grants</b>	Research fellowship: CHF 1'920.- per month = CHF 23'040.- for 1 year
	PhD scholarship: CHF 1'920.- per month = CHF 23'040.- for 1 year
	Post-doctoral scholarship: CHF 3'500.- per month = CHF 42'000.- for 1 year
	Fine Arts scholarship: CHF 1'920.- per month = CHF 23'040.- for 1 year

<b>Semester fees</b>	<b>Tuition fees and Master fees for artists</b>
	The FCS does not pay for tuition and/or semester fees. In most cases the universities and the Federal Institutes of Technology Lausanne and Zurich do not require scholarship holders to pay the semester fees (generally around CHF 600.- per semester). In some cases the universities do not waive the PhD fees. In case the Universities and the Universities of Applied Sciences and Fine Art Schools should not waive the fees, it is up to the grantee to pay for the fees.

<b>Insurance</b>	<b>Health insurance</b>
	According to the Swiss law, every resident in Switzerland must be covered by a Health Care Insurance (except for dental care). Usually, the worldwide scholarship holders are insured by the FCS. Please note, scholarship holders from EU and EFTA countries have to come with their European insurance card and pay themselves the relative expenses.

# Financial matters

## Travel expenses

### Europe

Grantees from continental Europe (European and East/ Central European countries) pay for their own travel expenses to Switzerland as well as back to their country of origin.

### Worldwide

Grantees from non-European countries (outside continental Europe) pay for their own travel expenses to Switzerland, but the FCS pays a return allowance (lump sum depending upon country of origin) for the ticket back to their country of origin at the end of the scholarship.

## Fieldwork and Conferences

### Fieldwork for PhD grant holders only

Once the scholarship is awarded PhD scholarship holders may submit a special request regarding their PhD thesis and the potentially necessary fieldwork. Up to a 1/3 of the field work costs for transport and accomodation (max. CHF 2000.-) may be refunded by the FCS. Valid for all scholarship types: There are no allowances for international conferences.

### Allowance up to six months after the scholarship

## Return allowance

However, the return allowance will not be paid if the scholarship holders extend their stay in Switzerland beyond six months after completion of their research, if they take up employment pending the continuation of their research or if they move to a third country.

# Preparing your application

**English, French,  
German, Italian**

## **Four admissible languages**

The application documents have to be submitted in **English, French, Italian or German**. If your documents are not in one of these languages, then **an authenticated translation** in one of these four languages must be included. Attestations can be done by a university or a government officer.

**Exception for India:** Self attested documents are accepted.

**Three sets to be  
submitted**

## **Submitting 3 sets of documents – each in the precise order**

Please submit 3 sets (= 1 original + 2 copies) of application documents in exact order given (see pages 16-19). The 1st set contains the original, signed documents plus, if applicable the attested translations. The other two sets are the copies of the 1st set.

**Fill in completely  
and sign your  
documents**

## **Complete and signed applications are valid only**

Please fill out the forms carefully and completely. Sign the form and the research proposal. Only signed applications are valid and eligible.

**Thank you for  
your patience**

## **Results follow until end of May next year**

If the application is short listed by the national authority and/or the Swiss Diplomatic Representation it will be sent to Switzerland for the final selection by the FCS. The FCS will inform you by the end of May next year at latest whether your application has been successful or not.

# Preparing your application

**Research, PhD and Post-doctoral scholarship applications**

## **Documents for Postgraduate Scholarships**

Please submit 3 sets (= 1 original + 2 copies) of application documents in exact order given below. The 1st set contains the original, **signed** documents plus the confidential letters of recommendation and, if applicable the attested translations. The other two sets are the copies of the 1st set except for the confidential letters of recommendation (only 1st set).

**Please do not put the documents into plastic folders or binders.**

- 1) **Signed FCS application form** (typed and printed) with photo.
- 2) A full CV with list of academic publications.
- 3) A motivation letter (max. 2 pages).
- 4) A complete research proposal (max. 5 pages, **signed**), using exclusively the FCS research proposal form.
- 5) A copy of the letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming that she/he is willing to support and supervise the research.

For research fellowships in addition:  
A short CV of the academic mentor at the home institution.

For PhD scholarships at doctoral schools\*:  
A proof that the applicant is being considered for admission. Except: EPFL accepted admission required.

- \* A support letter from a host professor is required in any case additionally.



# Preparing your application

Research, PhD and  
Post-doctoral  
scholarship  
applications

...continued

**Please  
do not put  
the documents  
into plastic folders  
or binders.**

- 6) Two confidential letters of recommendation from two different professors in the applicant's field (use exclusively the FCS form – originals in sealed envelopes only, for the first set).
- 7) Photocopies of certificates and grade sheets from previously attended universities/colleges and diplomas with grades, starting with the most recent. If not in English, French, Italian or German with attested certified translations. Exception for India: Self attested documents are accepted. Originals have not to be submitted.
- 8) **Signed** medical certificate (use only the FCS health certificate form).
- 9) Two copies of the applicant's passport (main page with personal data). Dual nationals add copies of both passports.

# Preparing your application

## Fine Arts scholarship applications

### Documents for Fine Arts Scholarships

Please submit 3 sets (= 1 original + 2 copies) of application documents in exact order given below. The 1st set contains the original, **signed** documents plus the confidential letters of recommendation and, if applicable the attested translations. The other two sets are the copies of the 1st set except for the confidential letters of recommendation (only 1st set).

**Please do not put the documents into plastic folders or binders.**

- 1) **Signed FCS application form** (typed and printed) with photo.
- 2) A full CV using the [Europass model](https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/en/cv/compose#) (this document is mandatory for fine arts scholarship applications. Download the form: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/en/cv/compose#>).
- 3) A motivation letter (max. 2 pages).
- 4a) For musicians:  
High-quality CD of 3 different styles of music if the music involves interpreters and directors. Composers have to submit their scores. (CD labeled with name, surname and country).
- 4b) For painters, graphic artists and sculptors:  
Copies or photos of 3 pieces of their work, along with rough drafts (incl. their dates of creation; work labeled with name, surname and country).
- 5) A proof for «admission is under consideration» at the intended Swiss fine arts or music school (conservatory). This may be in the form of a conditional acceptance pending an entry exam or other specific requirements. If applicable: A copy of the letter from a professor confirming the supervision of the studies.

*(to be continued see next page)*

# Preparing your application

Fine Arts scholarship  
applications

...continued

**Please  
respect  
the precise order  
of documents  
from 1) to 9)**

- 6) Two confidential letters of recommendation from two different professors in the applicant's field (use only the FCS form – originals in sealed envelopes only, for first set).
- 7) Photocopies of certificates and grade sheets from previously attended universities/colleges and diplomas with grades, starting with the most recent. If not in English, French, Italian or German, attested certified translations.
- 8) **Signed** medical certificate (use only the FCS health certificate form).
- 9) Two copies of the applicant's passport (main page with personal data). Double citizen add both copies.

# Finding your supervisor

## Finding a host professor

### A prerequisite for the application

All Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are supervised and supported by a professor. The first step in the application process for the scholarship candidate is to find a professor at a Swiss academic institution **willing to act as their academic supervisor** for the scholarship research project.

The FCS encourages candidates to find their supervisor on their own. There is no specific support offered in this bottom-up matching process. It is each applicants own task. A support letter from a host professor is required in any case.

### Understanding the role of academic supervisors

Professors reported to the FCS that they are frequently contacted by scholarship applicants asking for support. Therefore the FCS secretariat issued a leaflet explaining the role of an academic supervisor for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship holder.

## Good to know

The FCS recommends potential academic supervisors not to support more than 1 - 2 applicants per year. You find the leaflet "Will you be my supervisor?" enclosed in your application package. Feel free to use it when contacting your potential supervisor.

# Exclusion criteria

## Invalid applications

Your dossier will not be taken into consideration if it is in one of the following situations:

- Non eligible** - The applicant **does not fulfill the eligibility criteria** stated on the FCS website and in these application guidelines.
- Missing documents** - E.g. the application **does not include an invitation letter** from a Professor in Switzerland willing to support and supervise the research. If applicable, document from the doctoral school confirming your admission.
- Already in CH** - Applicants who are **in Switzerland for more than 12 months** at the beginning of the scholarship.
- Bad presentation** - The application is **incomplete**, does **not respect the guidelines**, does **not include the proper and completely filled FCS forms**, is **not submitted threefoldly** in the correct order or is **badly prepared**.
- Not accepted supervisors** - For Post-Docs: Not accepted are the **PhD mentors** and **co-directors** for co-tutelle PhD **at a Swiss university**.
- No supervisor** - An application without a host professor is not complete and will therefore be rejected.
- Non specific** - Applications **for 2 or more universities** and/or **for more than one scholarship type**.
- Rerun** - Applicants who have **already benefited** from a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship are not eligible for a second scholarship.
- Careful preparation is worthwhile** - Incomplete or badly prepared applications will not be taken into consideration!

Secretariat FCS · ESKAS · CFBE  
Federal Commission for Scholarships for foreign students  
International Scholarships SERI  
3003 Bern

[www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships\\_eng](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng)

Eidgenössische Stipendienkommission für ausländische Studierende ESKAS  
Commission fédérale des bourses pour étudiants étrangers CFBE  
Commissione federale delle borse per studenti stranieri CFBS

[www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships\\_de](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_de)  
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