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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER

Federal Commission for Scholarships  
for Foreign Students FCS

Academic Year  
2017-2018

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

# Application Guidelines for the Academic Year 2017-2018

**To prepare a successful application:**

Please read carefully and respect these guidelines exactly

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Further information : [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), 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

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.

# 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)

**In the autumn**

## **Call for proposals**

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

**Before winter**

## **Submission deadline**

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

**In spring**

## **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 scholarship, Post-doctoral scholarship as well as PhD scholarship candidates have to submit a complete research proposal (max. 5 pages), **using exclusively the official 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.

## Host professor

### Academic supervisor

To have an eligible application package, the applicant wishing to undertake a research scholarship, a PhD scholarship or a Post-doctoral scholarship must find a professor in Switzerland willing to supervise their scholarship research project. A letter of invitation must imperatively be part of the application package.

**Failure to have a supervisor will result in the rejection of the application** by the relevant national institution in the host country or by the Swiss diplomatic representation.

## 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.

# 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 Scholarships (12 months)**

Intended for highly qualified postgraduate researchers from all academic fields.

- Master degree or equivalent
- Not older than 35 years old
- Letter (or e-mail) from a Professor from the Swiss host institution stating that they are willing to supervise the research.
- Research proposal including time frame

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

Intended for highly qualified PhD students from all academic fields.

- Master degree or equivalent
- Not older than 35 years old
- Letter (or e-mail) from a Professor from the Swiss host institution stating that they are willing to supervise the PhD thesis.

Exceptions: EPFL doctoral school candidates need the admission letter from EPFL. Doctoral school candidates for other institutions need a proof that they are being considered for admission (e.g. IHEID).

- Admission to the PhD studies by the academic host institution
- Research proposal including time frame

# Scholarship types

## Postgraduate scholarships

### Post-doctoral Scholarships (12 months)

Intended for highly qualified post-doctoral researchers from all academic fields.

- PhD degree
- Not more than 5 years after the award of the PhD
- Letter (or e-mail) from a professor or an academic contact person from the Swiss host institution stating that they are willing to supervise the post-doctoral research.
- Research proposal including time frame

## Master scholarships

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

Intended for highly qualified fine art students from all artistic fields.

- Bachelor degree or equivalent
- Not more than 35 years old
- A proof for «admission is under consideration» at the intended Swiss fine arts or music school or if applicable a confirmation letter (or e-mail) from a Professor stating that they are willing to supervise the studies

## List of countries

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

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, 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 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**

### PhD Scholarship

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

The PhD scholarships are **not automatically extended**. Every request will be analysed according to the FCS criteria as well as the academic results.

**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 up to 21 months **at most** (September – August/ January or May)  
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

Her/his academic profile, the research capacity and motivation.

#### 2) The research proposal

It's 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

<b>Eligible host institutions</b>	<b>Swiss public academic institutions</b> 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.
<b>Useful weblinks</b>	Information on the universities, programs, and professors (see academic supervisors -> preconditions to apply) can be obtained on the internet sites of the Swiss academic institutions, on the portal <a href="#">swissuniversities</a> and on the database <a href="#">Proff.ch</a> .
<b>Full-time research only</b>	The scholarship is valid only <b>for full-time research in Switzerland</b> . 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.
<b>Field work</b>	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 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.
<b>At max 12 months in Switzerland before start</b>	<b>Coming to Switzerland</b> Scholarship applicants who are in Switzerland since more than 1 year at the beginning of the scholarship will not be taken into account by the Swiss diplomatic representation.

# Obligations

## **Living in Switzerland**

### **Place of residence**

The scholarship holders must live in Switzerland – in the canton at their study place. 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. As a rule, the FCS does not provide any family allowance.

## **Notifying FCS about other grants**

### **Other grants**

In case you are awarded with another scholarship during your stay for the scholarship in Switzerland you are asked to notify the Federal Commission for Scholarships.

# Financial matters

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

	<b>Tuition fees and Master fees for artists</b>
<b>Semester fees</b>	The FCS does not pay for tuition and/or semester fees. In most cases the universities and the Federal Institute of Technology of Zurich (ETH Zurich) do not require scholarship holders to pay the semester fees (generally around 600.- CHF 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>Health insurance</b>
<b>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 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 pay for their own travel expenses to Switzerland, but the FCS pays an allowance (lump sum depending upon country of origin) for the return ticket at the end of the scholarship.

### Allowance up to six month 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**

**Three sets to be  
submitted:**

1st set original,  
attested, signed  
documents  
2 other sets are copies

**Fill completely and  
sign your documents**

**Thank you for  
your patience**

## **Four admissible languages**

The application documents have to be submitted in **English, French, German or Italian**. If your documents are not in one of these languages, then **an authenticated translation** in one of these four languages must be included.

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

Every application must include 3 sets (1 original plus 2 photocopies) of the following documents in the precise order. Please do not put the various documents into plastic sheets or binders. The FCS official application form has to be used (typed and printed completely; no handwritten form will be accepted).

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

Please fill out the forms carefully and completely. Sign the form, your CV, your motivation letter and the research proposal.

## **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**

Every application must include 3 sets (1 original plus 2 photocopies) of the following documents in the precise order. Please do not put the various documents into plastic sheets or binders. The FCS official application form has to be used (typed and printed; no handwritten form will be accepted).

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

1. Application form (provided with the application package)
2. Curriculum Vitae (incl. list of academic publications)
3. Motivation letter (max. 2 pages)
4. A complete research proposal (max. 5 pages), using exclusively the official research proposal form provided with the application package.
5. A copy of the confirmation from the professor at the intended Swiss University stating that they are willing to supervise the research. Please include a short CV of your academic host supervisor.  
*For research scholarship applications only.*  
Include as well a short CV of your academic contact person/ mentor at your home institution.
6. 3 sets of photocopies of all certificates and grade-sheets from previously attended universities/colleges and diplomas with grades (The copies must be translated and attested if originals are not in English, French, German or Italian). Attestations can be done by the University or a Government Officer.
7. 2 letters of recommendation from professors (use the official FCS form only)
8. A signed health certificate (on FCS form only)
9. 2 copies of your passport (main page with personal data) per application set

# Preparing your application

## Fine Arts scholarship applications

### Documents for Fine Arts Scholarships

Every application must include 3 sets (1 original plus 2 photocopies) of the following documents in the precise order. Please do not put the various documents into plastic sheets or binders. The FCS official application form has to be used (typed and printed; no handwritten form will be accepted).

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

1. Application form (provided with the application package)
2. Curriculum Vitae using the [Europass model](https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/en/cv/compose#) (this document is mandatory for Fine Arts Scholarship applications only. You can download the form at the following address: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/en/cv/compose#>)
3. Motivation letter (max. 2 pages)
4. For **painters, graphic artists and sculptors**: copies or photos of 3 pieces of their work, rough drafts (with **date of creation**) Imperatively put a label **with name, surname and country** on your work.

For **musicians**: High-quality CD of 3 different styles of music – if the music involves interpreters and directors. Composers have to submit their scores. Imperatively put a label **with name, surname and country** on the CD

*(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)**

5. An **admission/confirmation document** proofing that the applicant is being considered for admission at the intended Swiss fine arts or music school.  
If applicable: A confirmation (letter or e-mail) from a professor at the intended Swiss fine arts or music school stating that they are willing to supervise the studies.
6. 3 sets of photocopies of all certificates and grade-sheets from previously attended universities/ colleges and diplomas with grades (all copies must be attested, and translated if originals are not in English, French, German or Italian). Attestations can be done by the University or a Government Officer.
7. 2 letters of recommendation from professors (use the official FCS form only)
8. A signed health certificate (on FCS form only)
9. 2 copies of your passport (main page with personal data) per application set

# Finding your supervisor

## Where to find

### A prerequisite for the application

All Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are supervised by a professor. As non-binding resource the «swissuniversities'» database [www.proff.ch](http://www.proff.ch) may be helpful for you.

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.

An application without a host professor is not complete and will therefore be rejected.

## Good to know

### 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 a academic supervisor for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship holder.

The FCS recommends to potential academic supervisors to support 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

- The application **does not include an invitation letter** (or e-mail) from a Professor in Switzerland willing to supervise the research in one of the Swiss academic institutions.

### 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**.

### 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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