DEMENTIA **RESEARCH**

SYNAPSIS FOUNDATION SWITZERLAND

Questions and Answers on Synapsis Funding

FAQ on eligibility and application process

Can the Synapsis Foundation fund my project?
Applications within the framework of the funding schemes "Principal Investigator Project" and "Career Development Award" are only accepted in response to the annual Call for Proposals. For outstanding project ideas that do not meet the requirements of the published funding schemes, researchers can email hess@demenz-forschung.ch to explore funding through the Synapsis Booster Fond.

What type of projects are excluded from the Call for Proposals?
The foundation will not process applications falling under the following categories: Patent evaluation, seed funding for start-ups

Do I have to have a doctorate to apply?
Yes, all main applicants must have completed their doctorate, also applicants for a Career Development Award.

Do I have to be employed at a Swiss university/research institution at the time of application?
Main applicants must be affiliated with a Swiss university or research institution or attach a statement with their application in which the university /research institution confirms that the main applicant will be employed at the time of the project start. The future hosting institution needs to state that it will take over the administration of the third-party funds, if they are approved.

I work in another country and would like to be a co-applicant on a proposal. Is it possible to split the funding and pay a part to the foreign applicant?
The Synapsis Foundation supports research groups at Swiss universities or research institutions. The approved funds are paid to the main applicant at the Swiss institution and cannot be shared with foreign co-applicants. Co-applicants must secure their own funding.

I work in a private company – am I eligible to apply?
Grants can only be awarded to universities or other public research institutions. However, applicants from institutions that are not eligible for funding can be involved in a project as cooperation partners. Those cooperation partner will not receive any funds, only the university partner will receive financial support.

I am currently already receiving other funding. Can I still apply for funding from the Synapsis Foundation?
Yes. However, all funding sources need to be disclosed in the application, including a statement on how the funding relates to the application.

My project was funded by the Synapsis Foundation. Can I apply for funding for the follow-up project?
In principle, you can apply for a follow-up project. However, you are only eligible to apply if you did not receive any funding from Synapsis Foundation for at least one year at the time of application. Synapsis Foundation does not step in where other funders discontinued funding.

Can multiple applications be submitted from the same institution?
Yes.

Can I submit multiple projects for the same deadline?
No. You can only submit one application as main applicant. However, you can act as a co-applicant on further proposals.

Can I apply to other funding agencies with the same project in parallel?
Basically yes. However, you need to disclose all other submissions in the application form and inform Synapsis Foundation as soon as another funding body selected the proposed project for funding.

Can I get a preliminary assessment of my research proposal?
Receiving such advice before submitting an application is only possible with regard to the fit with the funding scheme. An assessment of details of the application cannot be given, as this is part of the review process.

Where can I find an overview of projects previously funded by the Foundation?
You can find a list of supported projects on the [Synapsis Foundation website](#).

I would like to apply for the Career Development Award for advanced postdocs. What does « advanced » mean?
An advanced postdoc brings 3-5 years of experience in a postdoc position and aims to apply for a group leader or faculty position within the next 2-3 years.

How do I submit an application?
To submit an application you need to choose the fitting application form on the [Synapsis Foundation website](#). For projects involving humans, human data or samples please use the form with the suffix « clinical ». All information required in the application template must be compiled in one pdf-document with a maximum size of 10 MB and submitted via the [submission tool](#).

What is eligible for funding?
The grants mainly cover personnel costs. Personnel costs include social security contributions of the employer. Eligible miscellaneous costs include: animal husbandry, reagents/consumables, equipment, service costs (e.g. analyses, utilization costs), publication costs as well as travel and representation costs for the participation in events organized by Synapsis Foundation. In addition, travel costs and participation fees for other scientific events of up to CHF 2'000 per year
can be booked on this grant. The Foundation takes the right to reduce the total grant amount if the budget does not seem adequate.

Are universities allowed to charge any overhead costs?
No. Grantees can't charge any indirect or overhead costs. The grant is not subject to Value Added Tax ("VAT").

FAQ about the selection process

What are the main criteria for funding in the selection process?
The main evaluation criteria are originality, innovation, scientific quality and feasibility of the proposed project, contribution to scientific knowledge, relevance to the call as well as experience and past performance of the main applicant.

Who selects the projects that will be funded?
The Scientific Advisory Board of Synapsis Foundation, supported by reviews of renowned international experts, select the projects to be funded in their evaluation meeting in November. The Foundation's boards as well as external reviewers maintain strict confidentiality regarding the review process and the reviewed proposals.

Who takes the final decision on funding?
The Foundation's Board of Trustees decides on the funding in its meeting in November, based on the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Board.

Why do I not get detailed feedback on my rejected application?
Synapsis Foundation needs to ensure that the review process is as time- and cost-efficient as possible. Therefore, the Scientific Advisory Board discusses and pre-selects the most promising proposals that will be sent out for external review. The main points of criticism are recorded in minutes, but these minutes cannot be shared with applicants, partly because of direct comparisons made with other applications evaluated in parallel. For those projects that are not sent out for external review no detailed feedback can be provided. For those projects that are sent out to external experts, the anonymized feedbacks are shared with the applicants, together with the rejection letter.

Can I resubmit a rejected application in a revised form?
Yes. A project can be resubmitted once. However, the resubmitted proposal must either address the reviewers' criticisms or describe how the application was revised.

What funding guidelines must I abide by as a grantee of the Foundation?
Synapsis Foundation is a non-profit organization under Swiss law and as such must ensure that the granted funds are used economically and properly. As the grant recipient, you are responsible for ensuring that principles stipulated in the grant agreement are brought to the attention of all those involved in the funded project and that they are adhered to.

How important should ethical issues be in my research project?
The Foundation expects grantees to pay special attention to questions of scientific and research ethics. If ethically relevant aspects become manifest in the course of the research process, the grantees are requested to report these to the relevant ethics committee and to the Foundation.

FAQs about the management of the grant

How will I know that my project was selected for funding?
Successful applicants will be informed about the funding of their project via e-mail and mail no later than 20 December of the respective year.

How do I receive the approved funds?
In the beginning of the subsequent year the grant agreements are drawn up. Once the grant agreement has been signed by all parties, Synapsis Foundation informs the grant recipient by when an invoice can be sent to Synapsis Foundation. This date will depend on the starting date of the project. The total grant amount will be divided in annual payments, according to the approved budget. The first instalment will not be transferred earlier than four weeks before the starting date of the project. Further instalments will be paid only after the submission and approval of an interim report. Synapsis Foundation will inform the grant recipient as soon as an invoice for the next instalment can be sent.

Do I have to submit progress reports?
Yes. Progress reports must be submitted annually to show how the project is developing. The template for the progress report will be sent to the main applicant. The submission deadlines for the progress reports (interim report and final report) are written in the grant agreement. Additional progress reports may be requested in the case of cost-neutral project extensions.

How do I have to prove how the funds are utilized?
The Foundation expects grant recipients to hand in financial statements together with each report. Additional information, such as invoices need to be provided upon request.

What does the Foundation expect from me in terms of public relations?
It is important to the Foundation that grantees make their results publicly available in established scientific journals and acknowledge the support provided by Synapsis Foundation. In addition, we expect grant recipients to support the Foundation´s communication activities proactively and cooperate constructively with the Communications Office of Synapsis Foundation. The Synapsis Foundation might also ask grant recipients to support or organize events for donors at their research institution.

Can I use the logo of Synapsis Foundation for posters or presentations?
Yes, we expect the grant recipients to publish the logo in connection with the Foundation's funding activities and to include it on posters, presentation or websites related to the funded project. Logos can be found online.

How can I participate in the Synapsis Forum?
The annual Synapsis Forum is restricted to researchers who receive(d) funding by Synapsis Foundation. Supported researchers will be invited by Synapsis Forum to register for the event.