

Leaflet about categories of employees, eligibility windows and duration of employment

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1. Principles

Three categories of employees are funded under SNSF grants: "doctoral students", "postdocs" and "other employees". This categorisation is based on the employee's official status under the grant. This status must be clearly communicated to the SNSF.

The SNSF's commitment to promoting young researchers is an important part of its research funding mandate. This implies that SNSF-funded employees should not remain in any of these three categories over a long period of time.

The target for doctoral students is to complete their dissertation in good time. The maximum funding period for doctoral students is four years.

For postdocs, the goal is to become scientifically independent as soon as possible so that they can compete at an international level and maximise their academic career prospects. The maximum funding period is five years.

The aim in employing other personnel is to ensure that each project is adequately staffed with qualified personnel who make specific contributions. Therefore, employees in the category "other employees" may not be funded uninterruptedly under an SNSF grant over a long period. The SNSF's research funding mandate does not include permanent financing of project employee positions at institutions.

2. Doctoral students

2.1 Definition acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.2, para. 2

Doctoral students are persons who collaborate on research funded by the SNSF and seek to obtain a doctoral degree in connection with their scientific contribution to said research. As a general rule, their doctoral thesis must be supervised by a grantee who is responsible for the funded research.

2.2 Maximum funding period acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.3, para. 1 and 6

The maximum period of employment funded by the SNSF is four years for doctoral students. However, the prolongation of funding due to continuing salary payments in the event of maternity, adoption, illness, accident and military or other services remains reserved.

2.3 Time window for the employment acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.3, para. 2 and 4

The relevant start date for calculating the four-year period for doctoral students is the actual start date of the dissertation, as communicated to the SNSF by the relevant grantees. The four-year time window starts one year after the said start date at the latest. This year may be used for preparatory activities connected to the dissertation, e.g. participating in classes at a doctoral school.

Upon request, the time window for the maximum employment duration may be extended by a maximum of one year if delays occur during an ongoing employment relationship, namely due to the following reasons:

- a. Maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or parental leave;
- b. Inability to work due to illness or accident;
- c. Responsibilities as a caretaker;
- d. Services that benefit the general public, namely military or civilian service;
- e. Professional development, namely internships or clinical work.

Only uninterrupted delays of at least two months' duration will be considered. Extension of the time windows does not in any way affect the maximum funding period.

If a doctoral student begins a new thesis after abandoning the original thesis, then the time window starts anew.

2.4 Salary range acc. to annex 12 of the general implementation regulations, and general implementation regulations, cl. 6.4, para. 2, and cl. 7.5, para. 3

The salary range for doctoral students is CHF 47,040 to 50,040.

The introduction of the salary range for doctoral students does not give rise to additional personnel costs. The former salary scales for minimal annual gross salaries (1st year: 47,040; 2nd year: 48,540; 3rd and 4th year: 50,040) remains applicable. Other tariffs within the salary range can be applied as well. Institutions are responsible for ensuring salary equality within their institutions.

Salaries must not fall below the minimum of the salary range for doctoral students regardless of their work-time percentage. If funding for doctoral students is obtained from various sources, the total sum must not be lower than the minimum of the salary range. The grantees or the institution employing them are entitled to pay doctoral students more than the maximum of the salary range. In such cases, the part that exceeds the maximum of the salary range must not be financed through SNSF funds.

In response to a written request stating reasons, the SNSF may reimburse additional expenses as additional personnel costs if they are the result of mandatory increases in the employer's social security contributions or an increase in the minimum of the salary range defined by the SNSF.

3. Postdocs

3.1 Definition acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.2, para. 3

Postdocs are researchers who are striving to become scientifically independent after obtaining their doctorate; they generally hold temporary positions within academia. Their main aim in the postdoc phase is to achieve the qualifications required to independently develop and conduct research projects and to assume scientific leadership positions.

3.2 Maximum funding period acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.3, para. 1 and 6

The maximum period of employment funded by the SNSF is five years for postdocs. However, the prolongation of funding due to continuing salary payments in the event of maternity, adoption, illness, accident and military or other services remains reserved.

3.3 Time window for the employment acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.3, para. 3 and 4

For postdocs, the relevant start date of the five-year period is the date of the viva voce or of the official acceptance of the thesis. Upon request, the start date may be postponed and the time window may be extended by a maximum of one year, namely if the delay occurs for the following reasons:

- a. Maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or parental leave;
- b. Inability to work due to illness or accident;
- c. Responsibilities as a caretaker;
- d. Services that benefit the general public, namely military or civilian service;
- e. Professional development, namely internships, clinical work.

Only uninterrupted delays of at least two months' duration will be considered. Extension of the time windows does not in any way affect the maximum funding period.

3.4 Salary range according to annex 12 of the general implementation regulations

The salary range for postdocs is CHF 80,000 to 105,000.

4. Other employees

4.1 Definition acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.2, para. 1

Other employees make a specific contribution to the research project; this category includes employees with a degree who do not intend to do a doctorate; employees with a doctorate who are not included in the postdoc category due to their period of employment and eligibility window; technicians; auxiliary staff.

4.2 Maximum funding period and time windows acc. to the general implementation regulations, cl. 7.2, para. 4

Salary costs of other employees may not be charged to the SNSF grants uninterruptedly over a long period. With regard to uninterrupted funding by the SNSF, all SNSF-funded employments and fellowships starting at the doctoral level are considered. Funding gaps of a few months are not regarded as an interruption in SNSF funding. No career measures may be requested for other employees.

4.3 Salary range acc. to annex 12 of the general implementation regulations

The salary range for other employees is CHF 40,000 to 105,000.

5. Overview table

	Doctoral students	Postdocs	Other employees
Short definition	Collaborate on research funded by the SNSF and seek to obtain a doctoral degree in connection with their scientific contribution to said research	Have less than 5 years' experience after the completion of their thesis, striving to become scientifically independent	Make a specific contribution to the research project. Technicians, auxiliary staff, employees with a degree or a doctorate who do not aim to obtain a higher degree in the context of the grant
Max. funding period	4 years	5 years	No maximum period, but salaries cannot be charged to the SNSF grants uninterruptedly over a long period; all SNSF-funded employment positions and fellowships, starting at doctoral level, are considered
Start of the time window	Actual start date of the dissertation, as communicated to the SNSF by the relevant grantees. The four-year time window starts one year after the said start date at the latest. This year may be used for preparatory activities connected to the dissertation, e.g. participating in classes at a doctoral school	Date of the viva voce or of the official acceptance of the thesis	n/a
Delay of the start of the time window	Already included in the definition of the start date	Max. 1 year, upon request	n/a
Prolongation of the time window due to uninterrupted delays of at least two months' duration	1 year for well-defined reasons (general implementation regulations cl. 7.3 para. 3); beginning of a new thesis after abandoning the original thesis	1 year for well-defined reasons (general implementation regulations cl. 7.3 para. 3)	n/a
Salary range (full-time basis)	47,040 – 50,040 (min. employment 60%)	80,000 – 105,000	40,000 – 105,000