

Fondo Istituzionale per la Ricerca (FIR) Call 2024 Support to young researchers

Introduction

The *Fondo Istituzionale per la Ricerca* (USI Institutional Research Fund, hereinafter referred to as “FIR”), aims to support structuring and strategic research activities at USI.

The FIR 2024 call focuses on:

- Supporting early-stage postdoctoral researchers (with a PhD degree) to enable them becoming scientifically independent.
- Supporting doctoral schools.
- Supporting innovative and interdisciplinary projects with particular reference to sustainability.

Call deadline for proposals submission: **30.09.2024 at 17:00 CET**.

Contact for enquiries: servizio.ricerca@usi.ch

The Rectorate strongly encourages the USI community to apply for these calls.

1. Support to Young Researchers

1.1. Objectives

To support early-stage postdoctoral researchers with a PhD degree in any discipline to develop independent research and acquiring competitive funds.

1.2. Eligible applicants

1.2.1. Eligibility window

Researchers who have obtained their doctorate at least 2 and no more than 8 years prior to the call deadline and who do not hold a professorial position yet.

The precise periods are calculated based on the submission deadline (30.09.2024) and the PhD defence date.

1.2.2. Extension of the eligibility window

Extensions of the aforementioned time windows are allowed for the following reasons:

- a. Maternity
- b. paternity, adoption or parental leave;
- c. inability to work due to illness or accident;
- d. care duties;
- e. services that benefit the general public, particularly military or civilian service;
- f. continuing education in connection with the applicant's research activities, particularly internships or clinical work;
- g. preparatory activities connected to the dissertation, e.g. participation in classes at a doctoral school.

In the event of maternity, the relevant period is extended by 18 months per child. For all other reasons, the weeks during which the research activity was interrupted or reduced will be considered for the extension.

1.2.3. Internal support

Both internal and external researchers can participate. Applicants must include a letter of support from a USI professor, confirming the willingness to host them for the entire duration of the grant.

Since the call is entirely funded by the USI Institutional Research Fund, USI-affiliated entities (IRB, IOR, IRSOL, FTL) cannot serve as the hosting institute.

1.3. Funding and duration

Up to CHF 120,000 for a duration of 24 months.

Eligible costs:

- Applicant's salary (up to 50% employment).
- Research costs: salaries of support staff (research assistants, student assistants), travel costs, costs for the organisation of conferences and workshops in connection with the project; consumables, field expenses, costs for computing time and data;
- Mobility costs of up to CHF 20,000;

Mobility stay abroad:

The grant can include a research stay abroad up to 12 months at a foreign host institution. Each request for a stay abroad must include a letter of invitation from the host professor as well as a dedicated budget; the research stay must be well motivated in the research plan.

1.4. Evaluation criteria

- PI's track record;
- Potential to achieve scientific independence;
- Quality of the project and potential contribution to PI's academic career;
- Consistency with USI's strategic research areas;
- Support from the hosting institute at USI (including affiliates) and possible co-funding;
- Planned mobility.

1.5. Application procedure

Application documents must include:

- Application form;
- Requested budget Excel form;
- CV (max. 2 pages);
- Publications list;
- Scientific description (max. 8 pages) ;
- Career plan and perspective for scientific independence and future funding (max 1 page);
- Letter of support from the USI host professor;
- If applicable: invitation letter from host professor abroad pursuant to Article 1.3;
- Cover letter if applicable.

Please send your complete application in one single PDF file to servizio.ricerca@usi.ch by the 30.09.2024 at 17:00.

- Two reference letters must be sent directly to servizio.ricerca@usi.ch by the signatories.

1.6. Evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure takes place in two phases. First, applications are peer-reviewed by external evaluators. Then, each application is assessed by 2 members of the Research Commission, acting as referees and co-referees. Applications are then discussed during the plenary meeting of the Research Commission. On the basis of the external peer-review, the assessment of the 2 referees and the plenary discussion, the Research Commission ranks the applications and submits a proposal to the Rectorate.

The final decision is taken by the Rectorate. Results are communicated to the applicants by end of January 2025.

1.7. Timeline of the call

Deadline of the call: 30.09.2024

Communication of decisions: end of January 2025

Earliest start: 01.02.2025

Latest start: 1 year after the decision date