

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) ETH Zurich Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

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Before you apply for an ETH Zurich postdoctoral fellowship

How many ETH Fellowships are available?

The ETH Zurich Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is cofunded by the EU Commission in the Frame of FP7 Marie Curie Actions – People. Approximately 28 ETH Fellows will be appointed each year. Circa the double of the to-be-funded fellows will be invited for an interview. The aim is to maintain at least 54 active Fellowships per year from the second year of the scheme onwards.

How much is an ETH Fellowship worth?

The ETH Fellowship will consist of CHF 204'300 salary for two years, including social security overhead. This translates into an annual gross salary for the ETH Fellow of CHF 86'300 in the first year and 90'600 CHF for the second year. Up to CHF 12'000 are awarded for research expenses per annum, including travel/mobility allowances and research costs contributions.

How do I apply?

You should apply jointly with your prospective ETH host professor using the online submission platform. See the detailed submission instruction document and guidelines.

What subjects are covered by the ETH Fellowships?

The ETH Fellowships are available for researchers in all disciplines that are covered by the research of the ETH host professors.

Where can I carry out the ETH Fellowship?

The ETH Fellowships can only be carried out at the ETH Zurich. You need to agree on a research project with your prospective host professor.

Can I apply if I have been working at the ETH Zurich for the last few months?

An employment at the ETH Zurich is not a precondition for an ETH fellowship; however, if you are already employed, you must not be so for more than 6 months prior to the application.

How long does an ETH Fellowship last? Is a Fellowship prolongable?

The duration of an ETH Fellowship is two years and cannot be prolonged. Employment after the initially granted time must be financed from other sources.

What criteria are used to assess applications?

Applications will be assessed against criteria addressing the candidate's aptitude as well as the quality of the proposed research and the synergy with the host lab. Successful applications must be compelling in all respects.

The criteria pertaining to the candidate's aptitude are based on the CV, the letters of reference and the career outline and include research performance, track record relative to opportunities and career stage, competence for the proposed work, and compatibility of the ETH Fellowship with the career goals of the applicant. With respect to the research proposal, the scientific quality of the planned research will be evaluated, the suitability of the proposed procedures, difficulties to be expected and chances of success as well as the significance and innovativeness of the project.

What is the role of the ETH host professor?

The ETH host professor will act as your main research contact at the ETH Zurich, providing research support and guidance, access to necessary facilities and infrastructure (desk, lab and bench space, consumables, equipment) and assistance with practical and research arrangements.

Who is entitled to be a host professor?

The ETH host professor must hold a permanent or fixed-term contract (lasting for the duration of the ETH Fellowship) at the ETH Zurich. ETH Zurich Professor co-belonging to an institution within the ETH Domain (Eawag, WSL, Empa and PSI) can act as a mentor.

What information is required from the ETH host professor?

The ETH host professor is required to provide details and information on their research career and to explain the reason he/she is prepared to collaborate with you in an invitation letter. You jointly need to elaborate a research proposal. Furthermore he/she needs to submit the application, if you are not yet employed at the ETH Zurich. In addition, all expenses associated with bringing you in for the interview must be covered by the host professorship.

Does the Office of Research help to find a suitable host professor at the ETH Zurich?

You have to contact your preferred host professor on your own. Please, check if you fulfill the eligibility requirements, before you contact a potential ETH host professor.

Is there a biological age limit? Am I eligible to apply for funding for a second fellowship, if I have already completed/am currently involved in a postdoctoral fellowship?

There is no biological age limit, but an academic age limit. Only candidates are eligible, who have obtained their dissertation within two years of the submission deadline. If you have already started a postdoc, you are eligible as long as you apply within these two years. If required, you may also submit

your application up to 6 months ahead of your graduation with a certification of the planned date of the defense.

Submitting your application

Login

Use your ETH Zurich user name and password (**nethz login**) to login to the system. If you are not yet an ETH employee, the electronic submission system must be operated by an employee of the host professorship. We expect that you get full support by your respective host professorship.

What is the 'exact' deadline?

The exact submission deadline is on midnight on the day of the submission deadline. However, no assistance is provided outside of office hours should problems occur with the electronic submission.

How do I submit my application?

The whole application must be submitted on the web platform provided under the link www.ethfellows.ethz.ch. The only exception is the signed cover sheet. A hardcopy of this page has to be sent to the Office of Research, at the latest seven days after the submission deadline.

Can the reference letters be submitted together with the application? Can I submit more than two reference letters?

No, the reference letters must be sent electronically directly to the Office of Research, to the following address: ethfellows@sl.ethz.ch. You should submit only two letters of reference. The reference letters should arrive at latest on 20 February for the 1 March submission deadline and on 20 August for the 1 September deadline.

What are the structure and the formal requirements for the project description and the CV?

For the project description, the form available in the download area should be used. This form lists all the relevant chapters for the project description.

- The **project detail** part has a page restriction of five pages, not counting the literature.
- **Other costs:** The explanations for the material costs don't have to be very detailed. Broader categories with some **explanatory remarks** (e.g. consumables, travel, conference fees etc.) should be indicated. You can for example buy a laptop for field work, but after your postdoc time it remains in the lab. **Travel/conference cost or moving costs** will not be reimbursed retrospectively, but need to be included in the other costs category at the time of submission.
- **Teaching duties** are individual and depend on the agreement with the prospective host.
- The **CV** can be written in a free format, but please include a picture of yourself.

During the evaluation of your application

Can I choose the dates of the interview? Can I have the interview via Skype?

Due to a very tight interviewing schedule during the three days, it is impossible to choose an interview date and preferences for a certain day cannot be considered. In general, an interview via Skype is not permitted. Exceptions are emergency situations like sickness, visa problems, military service etc.

Do I have to present my project at the interview?

No. You will be asked questions about your proposed research project(s), the choice of the research lab, the particular strengths and skills you will bring to the host lab and how your ideas will thrive in collaboration with the ETH group, as well as about your future career prospects.

Is it possible to update my application after the submission, e.g. if a paper has been accepted?

No, modifications will not be accepted after the submission deadline.

After the decision

When do you communicate the results?

Candidates are informed six to eight weeks after the submission deadline, whether they are invited to an interview. Applicants who have passed the first step and who have been invited to an interview will be informed within approx. 4 months of the submission deadline, whether they will be granted an ETH Zurich Postdoctoral Fellowship.

Is it possible to resubmit a grant?

The ETH Fellowships are personal awards. The qualification of the candidate weighs just as much as the proposal, and hence resubmissions are not accepted.

Can I start the project as soon as I have fulfilled the requirements for the PhD or must I wait until the university has actually conferred the degree?

You don't have to wait until the university has conferred the degree, but you must provide an official document – for example, a letter by your Department Chair or Advisor confirming that you have successfully defended your thesis or a provisory statement from your University. Of course, you will need to hand in a copy of your official certificate as soon as you get it.

Is it possible to start sooner/later than indicated in the application?

You may start immediately after you have received the decision letter and formal requirements for the salary payments have been organized, on every 1st of the corresponding month. At the latest, the ETH fellowship has to be started within six months after the submission deadline. If you cannot start within these six months, your host professor has to inform the Office of Research about the reasons of the delay. Exceptionally, postponed starts of fellowships can be accepted.

How do I find accommodation in Zürich? Where can I find other practical information regarding life in Switzerland?

A [welcome center](#) with desk opening hours will be in place at the ETH Hönggerberg, to help you with issues of practical life. For information on accommodation please check the [Housing Office of the ETH Zurich](#).

Do I have to provide a final report?

Yes, the necessary form will be sent to you shortly before the end of your fellowship via e-mail. You are expected to return this report at the latest after six weeks of the end of your fellowship.