



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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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
2025-2026

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

Application Guidelines for the Academic Year 2025-2026

To prepare a successful application:

Please read carefully and respect these guidelines exactly

Internet Link: www.sbfi.admin.ch/scholarships_eng

How does one apply ?

1

- Go to the website www.sbfi.admin.ch/scholarships_eng

2

- Select your country of origin (this is the country according your passport)
- Check the scholarships available for your country (see list of countries and territories).
- Check the application deadlines for your country (see list of countries and territories).

3

- Read the „Application Guidelines for Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships“.
- For further questions check the FAQ and
- Contact the Swiss Embassy or the competent national institution (see list of countries and territories)..

4

- Download the application package.
- Fill out and print.
- Note: Two paper copies of your application must be submitted.

5

- To submit your application:
- Send the application to the postal address of your country of origin (see list of countries and territories).

**Scholarship applications to be submitted at the Swiss Embassy
or the competent national institution in your country of origin**

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For further information see :

> www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng > select your country of origin for full details

About the ...

Postgraduate scholarships

Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships

Through the Swiss Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS aka ESKAS, CFBE), the Swiss Government grants foreign researchers postgraduate scholarships at Swiss higher education institutions (esp. Universities, Federal Institutes of Technology and Universities of Applied Sciences, 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 ESKAS webpage

Specific scholarship types are offered for each country.

Please go to the ESKAS webpage in order to see which type of scholarship is offered to your country of origin. Read the „Application Guidelines“ and download the „Application Package“.

See: www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng

Submit in your country of origin

Applications have to be submitted in the candidate's country of origin (citizenship). All candidates for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship have to submit their application at the specified contact (normally the Swiss Embassy) responsible for their country of origin. Applicants who hold dual citizenship submit their application in their country of residence – provided they also hold citizenship of that country. These candidates with dual citizenship are free to choose in which of the two countries they wish to submit their application.

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 ESKAS for final selection. In case your current country of residence is not your country of origin please submit your application to the Swiss diplomatic representation in your country of origin.

Application procedure

All year round

Entry Points

The Swiss diplomatic representation in the country of origin of the applicant is the entry point for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships.

In August

Release

Detailed information about the scholarship types available for your country of origin, the eligibility criteria and the deadlines are online. Click the website: www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng

September - November

Call for proposals

Download the application package from www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng and prepare your file.

Check for your country

Submission deadline

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

Before end of May

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

1st of September

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

Its 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 a Swiss university/ institute have a certain priority.

Academic host – a precondition

Academic supervisor aka host professor

Academic supervisor

To have an eligible application package, each applicant wishing to undertake a research, PhD or a Postdoctoral scholarship must find a host professor in Switzerland willing to support and entitled to supervise their scholarship research project or PhD project.

A specific letter of invitation must imperatively be part of the application package. This is also valid for doctoral schools (aka doctoral programmes).

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

Before contacting a host professor

Prepare yourself well before contacting a prospective host professor

Make sure that the prospective academic supervisor actually works in your field at a Swiss university.

Be specific and furthermore make sure that you possess all of the competences required for the intended scientific collaboration. Find out, for instance, what requirements must be met in order to obtain a Master's degree at the university in question before contacting professors.

Note: Many professors receive numerous requests. Finding a professor who is willing to supervise you can be a major challenge. It can take several weeks or even months.

Please note

The ESKAS application for a PhD scholarship including the support letter of a prospective host professor and the application for admission by a Swiss University for a PhD study are two separate procedures.

Finding your supervisor

Where to find

A prerequisite for the application

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 her/ his academic supervisor for the scholarship research project.

What should you do before contacting a potential academic supervisor?

Watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp4NnqZ2T00>

Some hint

The ESKAS encourages candidates to find their academic supervisor on their own. There is no specific support offered in this bottom-up matching process. It is each applicants own task.

A support letter from a host professor is required in any case. This is valid for PhD applications at doctoral school (aka doctoral programmes) as well. If the chosen doctoral school does not allow you to contact a supervisor before being admitted to the school, an application for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship is not possible.

Understanding the role of academic supervisors

Professors reported to the ESKAS that they are frequently contacted by scholarship applicants asking for support. Therefore the ESKAS secretariat has published a leaflet explaining the role of an academic supervisor for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship holder.

Good to know

The ESKAS recommends potential academic supervisors not to support more than 1 - 2 applicants per year. To comply with the rules of the host university potential academic supervisors are asked to inform themselves about their internal regulations before deciding to support a Swiss Government scholarship holder. You find the leaflet «Will you be my supervisor?» enclosed in your application package. Feel free to use it when contacting your potential supervisor.

Types of scholarships available

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 prolongable

Research Fellowships

12 months (September – August) – no prolongation possible.

Cannot be upgraded into a prolongable PhD scholarship.

Grant applications for stay lasting less than 9 months will not be treated as a priority.

Grant applications for stay lasting less than 6 months will be rejected.

Prolongable

PhD Scholarship

12 months (September – August) – prolongable up to 36 months

The PhD scholarships can be prolonged in three steps of 12 months based on the achieved academic results.

It is the concerned grant holder's and the supervisor's responsibility to find sufficient funding beyond the maximal duration of the PhD scholarship (36 months) if it turns out to be necessary to end the doctorate.

Not prolongable

Postdoctoral Scholarship

12 months (September – August) – no prolongation 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.

Prolongable

Arts Scholarships

12 months (September – August) – prolongable up to 21 months at most

depending on the Master programme chosen and the necessary ECTS credits.

Research Fellowships

Go to the ESKAS Webpage in order to see which type of scholarship is offered to your country of origin

Postgraduate scholarships

Cotutelle de thèse

Research Fellowships (12 months)

- Intended for highly qualified postgraduate researchers from all academic fields.
- Master degree or equivalent achieved (degree certificate) before 31 July 2025 (except: ETH Zurich: 30 June 2025)
- Date of birth after 31 December 1989
- A copy of the support letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV, maximum 2 pages) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the research. This letter is not the same as the also requested confidential recommendation letter.
- Research proposal including time frame

Furthermore, this scholarship type is not available for scholars holding a PhD degree.

PhD students with an ongoing or planned doctoral project that is carried out within the framework of a formalised agreement between two universities («cotutelle de thèse» cooperation between a Swiss and a foreign university) and under the joint direction of two supervisors are eligible for this scholarship category only.

Research Fellowships

Validity

The Scholarship is valid only for full-time research in Switzerland. It is not valid for mixed research (part time in Switzerland and part time in another country).

This scholarship is not compatible with fieldtrips outside Switzerland. Therefore no possibility and no funding for fieldwork.

Applicants must have a research proposal including a timeframe. This is the centrepiece of the application. The applicant must devote all required attention to it.

Specific conditions

Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.

PhD Scholarships

Go to the ESKAS Webpage in order to see which type of scholarship is offered to your country of origin

PhD Scholarships

(12 months up to 36 months prolongable in 3 steps of 12 months each based on the achieved academic results)

Intended for highly qualified PhD students from all academic fields.

- Master degree or equivalent achieved (degree certificate) before 31 July 2025 (except: ETH Zurich: 30 June 2025)
- Date of birth after 31 December 1989
- A copy of the support letter (including a short CV, maximum 2 pages) from an academic host professor who is entitled and willing to supervise a PhD at the chosen Swiss university during the entire duration of the doctoral studies. The support letter should contain the reasons why she/he is willing to supervise and support the PhD thesis. If an assistant professor supports a candidature, a full professor who is entitled to supervise the PhD during the entire scholarship has to co-sign the support letter. This letter is not the same as the also requested confidential recommendation letter.
- Please note: Doctoral degrees can only be awarded by research universities. For PhD studies at a University of Applied Sciences and UniDistance Suisse an additional letter of support from a faculty member of the host research university at which the PhD will be completed is mandatory.
- Research proposal including time frame. This is the centrepiece of the application. The applicant must devote all required attention to it.

PhD Scholarships

- Full-time PhD only** The scholarship is valid only for full-time PhD studies in Switzerland at a Swiss university. It is not valid for mixed PhD programmes (part time in Switzerland and part time in another country).
Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.
- Maximum 6 months field research** PhD students whose studies require mandatory fieldwork must indicate this in their application (research proposal), stating the duration and destination outside Switzerland. Please note: During the entire PhD scholarship (36 months) the maximum duration of the PhD field work abroad in principle cannot exceed a total of 6 months. There is no additional financial support for fieldwork (e.g. travel costs, housing, travel insurance etc.).
- Cotutelle de thèse** PhD students with an ongoing or planned doctoral project that is carried out within the framework of a formalised agreement between two universities («cotutelle de thèse» cooperation between a Swiss and a foreign university) and under the joint direction of two supervisors are eligible for a 12 month research fellowship only.
- Further important information for PhD applicants** The ESKAS application for a PhD scholarship and the application for admission by a Swiss university for PhD studies are two separate procedures. It is the applicant's responsibility to manage both procedures in parallel.

PhD Scholarships

Two different admission requirements for PhD scholarship application

Option 1: For PhD studies under the supervision of an academic supervisor (mentor):

The scholarship applicants for a regular PhD must hand in the support letter of their academic supervisor, however, a PhD admission letter is not required at that point.

Option 2: PhD studies at a doctoral school where you don't get an assigned supervisor in the first year:

The admission to the doctoral school (aka doctoral programme) is a *conditio sine qua non* for a scholarship application. The proof for admission (admission letter) from the doctoral school has to be submitted together with the scholarship application simultaneously and additionally together with the support letter of the academic supervisor.

Please note: If the chosen doctoral school does not allow you to contact a supervisor before being admitted to the school, the application for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship is not possible. In case you do not get the admission to the doctoral school until the application deadline, and therefore cannot apply for the next academic year, you can always begin your studies without the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship and then apply for the following academic year. Please note: the exclusion criteria «Applicants who have been in Switzerland since more than one year at the beginning of the scholarship in September are not eligible» stays effective.

If you are not sure which option applies for your case please enquire all possible questions (e.g. admission etc.) directly with the corresponding university respectively the doctoral school at the host institution. Not all universities have a doctoral school (for example, University of Fribourg does not).

Postdoctoral Scholarships

Postdoctoral Scholarships (12 months)

Specific conditions Intended for highly qualified early career scientists on postdoctoral level from all scientific fields.

- PhD degree achieved after 31 December 2021 and before 31 July 2025 (except: ETH Zurich: 30 June 2025) PhD degree certificate completed.

- Primarily for scholars who have not already been to Switzerland.

Go to the ESKAS Webpage in order to see which type of scholarship is offered to your country of origin

- No funding for sabbaticals.
- A copy of the letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV, maximum 2 pages) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the postdoctoral research.
- Not accepted as academic supervisors for Postdoctoral scholarship applicants are their former PhD mentors and their co-directors for the co-tutelle PhD.
- A research proposal including a timeframe. This is the centrepiece of the application. The applicant must devote all required attention to it.
- This scholarship is valid only for full-time postdoctoral research in Switzerland. It is not compatible with fieldtrips outside Switzerland. Therefore no possibility and no funding for fieldwork.
- Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.
- In the case of double doctorates, the date of the 1st degree counts.
- It is not valid for mixed research (part time in Switzerland and part time in another country).

Arts Scholarships

Go to the ESKAS Webpage in order to see which type of scholarship is offered to your country of origin

Art Scholarships

(12 months prolongable up to 21 months at most depending on the MA chosen and the necessary ECTS credits)

Intended for highly qualified art students from all artistic fields wishing to pursue an master's degree course.

- The arts scholarships are granted at any Swiss conservatory or universities of the arts.
- Valid for full-time studies in Switzerland only.
- Bachelor degree or equivalent achieved before 31 July 2025 (degree certificate)
- Applicants should start their scholarship no later than three years after graduating with their Bachelor's degree.
- Applicants must be born after 31 December 1989
- A proof for "admission is under consideration" at the intended Swiss arts or music school (conservatory). This may be in the form of a conditional acceptance pending an entry exam or other specific requirements. If applicable: a copy of the letter from a professor confirming the supervision of the studies.
Or, if applicable the confirmation from the art or music school that the admission procedure cannot be started before the scholarship application deadline.
- Invalid: All applications for a second master's degree.
- Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.

Arts Scholarships

List of eligible countries

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

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, United States of America

Specific conditions

PLEASE NOTE:

The application for a ESKAS Arts Scholarship and the application for admission by your chosen Swiss conservatory or art school (university of applied sciences) are two separate procedures.

ESKAS applicants have to document that an institution has accepted them or a proof for «admission is under consideration» at the intended Swiss arts or music school (conservatory).

This may be in the form of a conditional acceptance pending an entry exam or other specific requirements.

Without such a document, the application will be rejected. If applicable: a copy of the letter from a professor confirming the supervision of the studies.

Study location

Eligible host institutions	Swiss public academic institutions 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 arts. The arts and music scholarships are granted for studies in the public music academies, as well as art and design schools. It is up to the individual academic supervisor, potential host for scholarship holders, to decide whether to accept students or not.
Useful weblinks	Information on the universities, programmes, and professors can be obtained on the internet sites of the Swiss academic institutions, on the portal swissuniversities and «study in Switzerland+» .
Full-time research only	The scholarship is valid only for full-time research in Switzerland. It is not valid for on-the-job studies, part-time studies, correspondence courses or mixed programmes (part time in Switzerland and part time in another country). During their scholarship grant holders are resident in Switzerland.
Field work for PhD grant holders only	The scholarship is meant for conducting research in the Swiss host institution. For Research as well as Postdoctoral scholarships, no fieldwork abroad of Switzerland is possible during the scholarship period. PhD students working in an academic field where fieldwork is indispensable, have to submit a request for acceptance of fieldwork indicating in advance the exact period, destination and purpose. A support letter by the academic supervisor has to be enclosed. There is no additional financial support for fieldwork by ESKAS.
At max 12 months in Switzerland before start	This scholarship primarily offers an opportunity to scholars who have not already been to Switzerland. Applicants who have been in Switzerland since more than one year at the beginning of the scholarship in September are not eligible. Reference document if applicable: residence permit to be added to the application documents.

Eligible academic host institutions

Eligible host institutions

For postgraduate scholarships

(Research Fellowships, PhD, Postdoctoral)

[University of Basel](#)

[University of Bern](#)

[University of Fribourg](#)

[University of Geneva](#)

[University of Lausanne](#)

[University of Lucerne](#)

[University of Neuchâtel](#)

[University of St. Gallen](#)

[University of Zurich](#)

[Università della Svizzera italiana](#)

[Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne \(EPFL\)](#)

[Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich \(ETHZ\)](#)

[Research Institutes of the ETH Domain \(PSI; WSL; EMPA; EAWAG\)](#)

[Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies \(IHEID\)](#)

For postgraduate scholarships

(Research fellowships and Postdoctoral only)

[University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland \(HES-SO\)](#)

[Bern University of Applied Sciences \(BFH\)](#)

[University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland \(FHNW\)](#)

[Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences \(OST\)](#)

[University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons \(FHGR\)](#)

[Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts](#)

[University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland](#)

[Zurich University of Applied Sciences \(ZHAW\)](#)

[Universities of teacher education](#)

[UniDistance Suisse](#) (presence in Switzerland mandatory)

[Swiss Federal University for Vocational Education and Training SFUVET](#)

[Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen SFISM](#)

Eligible academic host institutions

Eligible host institutions

For art scholarships

[University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland](#)

[Bern University of the Arts](#)

[University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland](#)

[University of Applied Sciences Eastern Switzerland](#)

[Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts](#)

[University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland](#)

[Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana](#)

[Zurich University of the Arts](#)

Obligations

Living in Switzerland

Place of residence

The scholarship must be carried out in Switzerland. Therefore, the Swiss Government Scholarship holders must move to Switzerland during their grant period. The scholarship holders must be resident preferably in the city (in Switzerland) or in the Canton of their research/study institution. They must comply with the ESKAS instructions, regulations concerning the residence for foreigners in Switzerland and with the university/ art institution regulations.

No family allowances

Family and children

The ESKAS 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. The scholarship amount covers the living costs of one person only. There are no additional family allowances.

Neither the ESKAS nor the university's reception service can assist you with questions and fees associated with the arrival of family members.

Notifying ESKAS about other grants and other forms of financial support

Other grants and additional income

Please note for PhD scholarships: At some universities, such as EPFL, ETH Zurich, University of Lausanne, University of Zurich the scholarship is not considered sufficient funding. The academic host professors must supplement the funding.

If you are awarded another additional scholarship or you receive other forms of financial support (such as a supplementary funding, an income from teaching and research assistance, etc.) you are asked to notify the Federal Commission for Scholarships. The scholarship cannot be used as top-up to an existing full employment though.

Financial matters

Grants	Scholarship amount (Please note: This scholarship is not a salary.)
	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
	Arts scholarship: 1'920.- Swiss Francs per month = 23'040.- CHF for 1 year
	Postdoctoral scholarship: 3'500.- Swiss Francs per month = 42'000.- CHF for 1 year
	No financial support for fieldwork or for conferences. Grant holders receive a one-year half-fare public transportation card in Switzerland. Support services organise various trips, dinners and sightseeing tours for Swiss Government Scholarship holders.
Housing allowance	All scholarship holders receive a one-time lump sum of CHF 300.- with the first grant payment to help them pay part of the housing deposit.
Semester fees	Tuition fees and Master fees for artists The ESKAS does not pay for tuition and/or semester fees. In some cases the universities and the Federal Institute of Technology do require scholarship holders to pay semester fees (approx. CHF 600.- up to CHF 2'000.- per semester) or at least reduced tuition fees. In some cases the universities do not waive the PhD fees. In case the Universities and the Universities of Applied Sciences and Art Schools should not waive the fees, it is up to the grantee to pay for the fees.
Insurance	Health insurance According to the Swiss law, every resident in Switzerland must be covered by a Health Care Insurance (except for dental care). For non-EU and non-EFTA grantees only: the ESKAS pays mandatory Swiss health insurance. Please note, each ESKAS scholarship holder from an EU and EFTA Member State is responsible for his/her insurance coverage and all resulting costs.

Financial matters

Europe

Travel expenses

Grantees from EU and EFTA member states pay for their own travel expenses to Switzerland as well as back to their country of origin.

Worldwide

Grantees from outside the European Union and the EFTA pay for their own travel expenses to Switzerland, but Scholarship holders from non-EU and non-EFTA countries receive a return flight allowance (lump sum depending upon the country of origin) for a ticket back to their country of origin (provided 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.

No allowances

Conferences/ Congress

Valid for all scholarship types: There are no allowances for international conferences.

Fieldwork only for PhD grant holders possible

Fieldwork

Once the scholarship is awarded PhD scholarship holders may submit a special request regarding their PhD thesis and the potentially necessary fieldwork. The scholarship may continue during the fieldwork up to six months. No additional financial support is possible though for fieldwork by ESKAS. For other scholarship types, no fieldwork abroad of Switzerland is possible during the scholarship period.

Preparing your application

**English, French,
German, Italian**

Four admissible languages

The application documents have to be submitted in English, French, Italian or German. If your documents are not in one of these languages, then an authenticated translation in English must be included. Attestations can be done by a university or a government officer.

Exception for India: Self attested documents are accepted.

**Two sets to be
submitted:**

**1st set original,
attested, signed
documents**

2nd set with copies

Submitting 2 sets of documents – each in the precise order

Include the following information in your CV: personal education and training, degrees and diplomas (with precise dates), if applicable: awards, academic positions (with precise dates), non-academic positions (with precise dates), publications with references, conferences, academic teaching experiences, extra academic experiences, links to your sciences blogs, your presentation online.

ESKAS advises against the use of the Europass CV template.

Your CV must include

Complete and signed applications are valid only

Please fill in the forms carefully and completely. Sign the application form and the research proposal. Only signed applications are valid and eligible.

**Fill in completely and
sign your documents
Thank you for
your patience**

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 ESKAS. The ESKAS will inform you by the end of May next year at latest whether your application has been successful or not.

Documents for postgraduate scholarship applications

Research, PhD and Postdoctoral scholarship applications

Documents for Postgraduate Scholarships

Please submit 2 sets (= 1 original + 1 copy) of application documents in exact order given below: The 1st set contains the original, signed documents plus the confidential letters of recommendation and, if applicable the attested translations in English. The other set is the copy of the 1st set except for the confidential letters of recommendation (only 1st set). No copies for 2nd set.

Please do not put the documents into plastic folders or binders. And do not use clips or staples.

- 1) Signed ESKAS application form (typed and printed) with photo.
- 2) A full CV with list of personal education and training, degrees and diplomas (with precise dates), awards, academic positions (with precise dates), non-academic positions (with precise dates), publications with references, conferences, academic teaching experiences, extra academic teaching experiences, links to your science blogs, your presentations online etc.
- 3) A motivation letter (max. 2 pages).
- 4) All applicants must have a clear research goal. Therefore research fellowship, postdoctoral scholarship as well as PhD scholarship candidates have to submit a complete research proposal (max. 5 pages, signed) including a layman abstract in English, using exclusively the ESKAS research proposal form provided with the application package. The research proposal is a central part of your application. Please devote the required attention to it and submit only a signed document.
- 5) A copy of the letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV, maximum 2 pages) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to support and supervise the research.

For research fellowships in addition:

A short CV (maximum 2 pages) of the academic mentor at the home institution.

For PhD scholarships at doctoral schools (aka doctoral programmes) only, in addition: The confirmation for accepted admission is required. A support letter from a host professor is required in any case additionally.

Documents for postgraduate scholarship applications

Research, PhD and Postdoctoral scholarship applications

...continued

Please do not put the documents into plastic folders or binders. And do not use clips or staples.

- 6) Two confidential letters of recommendation from two different professors in the applicant's field, and not identical with the academic supervisor at the host institution in Switzerland (use exclusively the ESKAS form – originals in sealed envelopes only, for the first set). No copies for 2nd set.
- 7) Photocopies of certificates and grade sheets from previously attended universities/ colleges and diplomas with grades, starting with the most recent. If not in English, French, Italian or German with attested certified translations in English. Exception for India: Self attested documents are accepted. Do not submit the original certificates.
- 8) Signed certificate «Fit for mission» (please use only the ESKAS form).
- 9) Two copies of the applicant's passport (main page with personal data). Dual nationals add copies of both passports. Applicants already in Switzerland during their application procedure add a copy of the residence permit for Switzerland.

Documents for art scholarship applications

Arts scholarship applications

Documents for Arts Scholarships

Please submit 2 sets (= 1 original + 1 copy) of application documents in exact order given below: The 1st set contains the original, signed documents plus the confidential letters of recommendation and, if applicable the attested translations in English. The other set is the copy of the 1st set except for the confidential letters of recommendation (only 1st set). No copies for 2nd set.

Please do not put the documents into plastic folders or binders. And do not use clips or staples.

- 1) Signed ESKAS application form (typed and printed) with photo.
- 2) A full CV with list of exhibitions, concerts, awards etc.
- 3) A motivation letter (max. 2 pages specifying the reasons to study in Switzerland, the importance of the choice for your future career as well as your professional projects at the end of the scholarship).
- 4) The applicants for art scholarships do not have to submit a research proposal.
 - 4a) For musicians: High-quality file of 3 different styles of music if the music involves interpreters and directors. (USB memory stick or CD/DVD labelled with name, surname and country; link or QR-Code). Composers have to submit their scores.
 - 4b) For painters, graphic artists and sculptors: Copies or photos of 3 pieces of your work, along with rough drafts (incl. their dates of creation; work labelled with name, surname and country).
 - 4c) For other artists (e.g. dancers, actors, authors): pieces of their art (USB memory stick or CD/DVD labelled with name, surname and country). *(to be continued see next page)*

Documents for art scholarship applications

Arts scholarship applications

...continued

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

- 5) A proof for «admission is under consideration» at the intended Swiss arts or music school (conservatory). This may be in the form of a conditional acceptance pending an entry exam or other specific requirements. If applicable, a copy of the letter from a professor confirming the supervision of the studies.
- 6) Two confidential letters of recommendation from two different professors in the applicant's field (use only the ESKAS form – originals in sealed envelopes only, for 1st set). No copies for 2nd set.
- 7) Photocopies of certificates and grade sheets from previously attended universities/ colleges and diplomas with grades, starting with the most recent. If not in English, French, Italian or German, attested certified translations in English. Do not submit the original certificates.
- 8) Signed certificate «Fit for mission» (please use only the ESKAS form).
- 9) Two copies of the applicant's passport (main page with personal data). Dual nationals add copies of both passports. Applicants already in Switzerland during their application procedure add a copy of the residence permit for Switzerland.

Exclusion criteria

Invalid applications – valid for all types of applications

- Non eligible**
 - The applicant does not fulfill the eligibility criteria stated on the ESKAS website and in these application Guidelines.
- No admission to doctoral school**
 - For PhD candidates at doctoral schools only: the document confirming your admission to the doctoral school is missing.
 - Applicants who are in Switzerland since more than one year at the beginning of the scholarship.
- Already in CH**
 - The application is incomplete, does not respect the guidelines, does not include the proper and completely filled ESKAS forms, is not signed (application form, research proposal), is not submitted twofold in the correct order, or is badly prepared.
- Bad presentation**
 - For PostDocs: Not accepted are the PhD mentors and co-directors for cotutelle PhD at a Swiss university.
- Not accepted supervisors**
 - An application without a host professor is not complete and will therefore be rejected.
 - The potential academic host professor at the Swiss institution must not be identical to the persons who submit a reference form.
- No supervisor**
 - An application with more than one research proposal is invalid.
- Non specific**
 - Applications for more than one university and/or for more than one scholarship type.
- Rerun**
 - If you are unsuccessful, you can apply a maximum of three times.
- Careful preparation is worthwhile**
 - Applicants who have already benefited from a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship are not eligible for a second scholarship.
 - Incomplete (e.g. without a specific invitation letter from an academic host Professor in Switzerland) or badly prepared applications will not be taken into consideration!

Secretariat FCS · ESKAS · CFBE
Federal Commission for Scholarships for foreign students
Talent Promotion SERI
3003 Bern

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
Federal Commission for Scholarships for foreign students FCS

www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_de
www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_fr
www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_it
www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng

Please note

Open the PDF forms with Adobe Acrobat Reader to fill in, save and print them.

If you have problems filling in and saving the PDF form, you can proceed as follows:

- Fill out the entire form at once **WITHOUT** saving it and print the completed form on paper. Sign the form and attach it to your application documents.

or

- **DO NOT** open the form "Application Form 2025-2026" with Adobe Acrobat, but with your browser (e.g. Edge or another browser). Complete the form and save it before printing it out.

Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships for Foreign Scholars and Artists

«Will you be my supervisor?»

You are a professor at a Swiss academic institution. Foreign students and postgraduate researchers contact you to ask if you will act as their academic supervisor and host professor. The following information may be useful to you in deciding how to deal with such a request.

- The Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (abbreviated as ESKAS in German and CFBE in French) sincerely thanks all potential academic supervisors for attentively choosing their candidate for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship and for giving them careful support.

Scholarship applicants are looking for host professors

- All Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are supervised by a professor. Therefore 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 supervisor** for the scholarship and support the research project.
- The ESKAS encourages candidates to find their supervisor on their own for their scholarship research project. There is no specific support offered in this bottom-up matching process.
- The supervisor **evaluates the academic suitability** of a candidate (incl. language skills) and **must endorse the research proposal** (including the time-frame), which is a central component of the application.
- The applicant has to reach an agreement with the supervisor. The **letter from the professor stating why** she/he is willing to **support and supervise** the PhD thesis or the (postdoctoral) research is a mandatory element of each application for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship.
- Without such support the scholarship application is not complete and will therefore be rejected.
- **The decision to act as academic supervisor or not is entirely up to you, of course.**

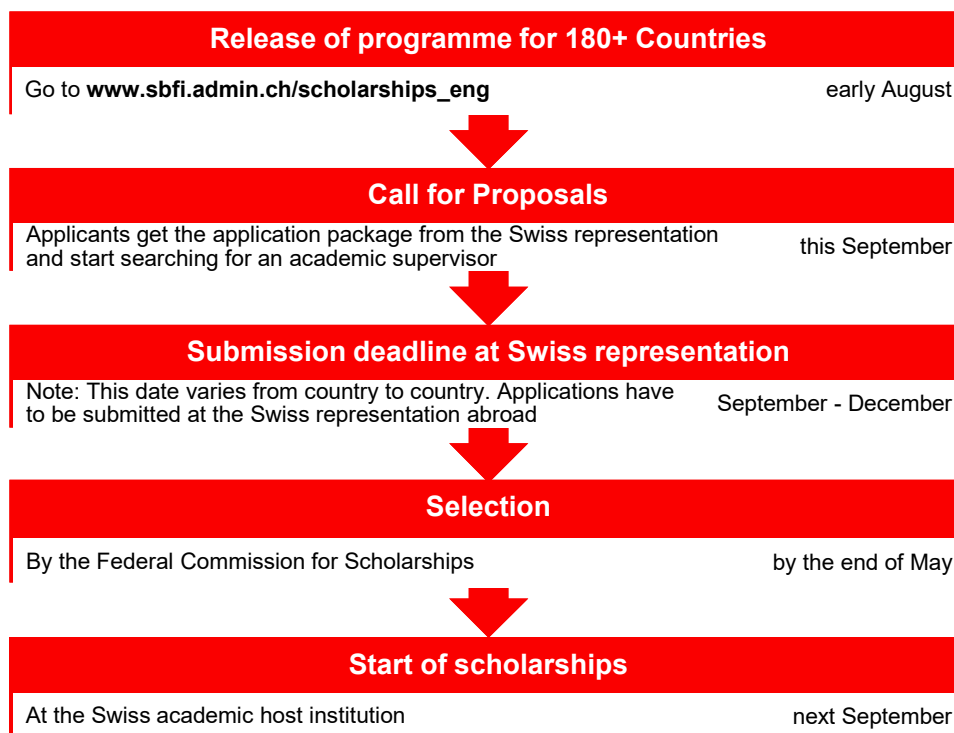
The academic supervisor:

A success factor and a role with responsibilities

- **If you agree** to act as an academic supervisor, you agree to supervise the scholarship holder during their whole research stay (12 months for research fellows and postdocs or 36 months for PhD scholarship holders). PhD thesis supervisors should do their utmost to ensure that adequate funding is available after the scholarship so that the thesis can be completed within a reasonable timeframe (1 or 2 additional years maximum).
- During the scholarship holder's stay in Switzerland, the Confederation together with the international relations office at your university and you as academic supervisor are responsible for them.
- As host professor **you agree to integrate the grantee into your team** and provide good research conditions (lab space and access to infrastructure). With consent of the ESKAS, a supplementary salary to the scholarship grant is possible up to a certain level. The scholarship cannot be used as top-up to an existing full employment.
- **Field research** is possible **for PhD scholarship holders only** and with accepted fieldwork request by ESKAS. No co-funding by ESKAS neither for fieldwork nor for attending conferences.
- Not accepted as academic supervisors for postdoctoral scholarship applicants are their previous PhD mentors and co-directors for the co-tutelle PhD at a Swiss university.
- **Major selection criteria** are the candidate's academic profile, their research capacity, and motivation plus the originality and methodological soundness of the research proposal as well as the quality and context of supervision and the potential for future academic cooperation. The ESKAS recommends that you **support 1 or 2 applicants per year only**.
- The Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are prestigious and highly competitive. The expected success rate is around 15 to 20 percent.
- **A letter of sufficient scope from the host professor** should describe the research proposal, the relation to the candidate and possible future collaboration. A short CV from the host professor should be enclosed.
- Your thoughtfully drawn-up host letter **could be the decisive element in the scholarship application.**

Application procedure

- Yearly release of the call in August. Preparation of application and submission in autumn. Peer reviews of applications during winter. Selection and announcement of decision in Spring. Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships run from 1st of September each year.



- Each year since 1961 the Swiss government has awarded **postgraduate scholarships** through the ESKAS to foreign scholars, now from over 180 countries. The following types of scholarships are offered: research fellowships, PhD- and Postdoc-scholarships as well as Arts scholarships (for selected countries only).
- Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are awarded for a period of **12 months**. Only PhD scholarships (CHF 1'920 per month) can be extended (up to 36 months at most). For PhD's lasting longer than 36 months the academic supervisors are expected to help organize a follow-up funding solution.
- Once the scholarship has come to an end, holders** are supposed to **return to their country of origin**. Finding employment in Switzerland after the end of the scholarship contradicts the intention of the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship, which is to promote brain and talent circulation.
- For detailed eligibility and exclusion criteria please consult the information online** (see link below).

Further information

Can be found at: www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng

Follow us



@Swiss_FCS

Contact us

State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI
International Scholarships
Einsteinstrasse 2, CH-3003 Berne
sgs@sbfi.admin.ch

Visit us



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FAQs for scholarship applicants

Bear in mind that professors at Swiss academic institutions receive numerous email requests to act as research supervisors for Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship holders. Your careful preparation and your targeted approach once you have completed your enquiries will raise your chances of attracting a professor's interest and possibly of receiving a positive answer. The following information may be useful before you decide how to approach a potential academic supervisor.

Who can help me find an academic supervisor?

As an applicant, you are responsible for finding a suitable research supervisor (professor). Neither the secretariat of the Federal Commission for Scholarships nor the international office at the universities can help you find an academic supervisor for your application for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship. We recommend you look for a suitable research supervisor by reading up on university websites and talking to any contacts you may have at your own academic institution.

What should I do before contacting a professor?

- a) Make sure that the prospective academic supervisor actually works in your field.
- b) Make sure that you possess all of the qualifications required for the intended scientific collaboration. Find out, for instance, what requirements must be met in order to obtain a master's degree at the university in question.

Finding a professor who is willing to supervise you can be a major challenge. It can take several weeks or even months.

See: <https://youtu.be/kp4NnqZ2T00>

How should I go about contacting a professor?

Be well prepared and focused. Make direct contact with a professor and declare your interest in collaborating in a specific research project. Tell the professor what you have studied so far and that you are applying for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship. All enquiries should be accompanied by the following documents, as a minimum: short CV, letter of motivation, 2-3 convincing letters of reference, research plan (2-3 A4 pages), all in correct English.

How many times am I allowed to submit a scholarship application?

If your application is not awarded a scholarship, we suggest not more than two additional applications for the same scholarship type.

Why there is no Art scholarship offer for my country of origin?

These scholarships are available to students from a limited number of countries only.

I do not fulfill all the application criteria, is there any other possibility?

On behalf of the Swiss Government, no other funding scheme is available. Maybe the following link might be of interest for you: <https://www.studyinswitzerland.plus/scholarships/>

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FAQs for academic supervisors

You are a professor at a Swiss academic institution. Foreign students and postgraduate researchers contact you to ask if you will act as their academic mentor or supervisor and host professor. The following information may be useful to you in deciding how to deal with such a request.

Why do FCS scholarship applicant contact professors in Switzerland?

Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are intended as Switzerland's contribution to preparing the next generation of professors and researchers in the country of origin. This is particularly crucial and important for doctoral students from developing countries or in countries that lack a strong tradition of PhD studies. Personal relations are an essential element in providing access to Switzerland's academic institutions and networks. Each application for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship must therefore be backed by a professor who has agreed to supervise the research, integrate the scholarship holder into their team and provide good research conditions.

What does supporting an FCS scholarship applicant involve?

The decision to act as academic supervisor or not is entirely up to you, of course. If you decide to do so, please bear in mind that giving your support is a commitment. In other words, if you choose to support a candidate, it means that you are familiar with his/her research project, you have discussed it with the applicant, and the research project relates to the research that you conduct in your department or laboratory. It is also important to realise that your support is not just a personal commitment: indirectly, it reflects on the research carried out by your institution, which places a double burden of responsibility on your shoulders.

How do I provide support to an FCS scholarship applicant?

Please send a letter describing in sufficient detail the research proposal, your relation to the candidate and possible future collaboration, and enclose your short CV. This confirmation of support should be written on paper with an official letterhead showing your institution's official contact details.

Should I support more than one candidate?

Do not assume that you will increase the chances of success by supporting several applicants: the FCS has a clear preference for solid support to individual applicants as opposed to noncommittal support for multiple applicants. The FCS recommends that academic supervisors support 1 or 2 applicants per academic year only.

What is the role of the academic supervisor?

If you agree to act as an academic supervisor, you agree to supervise the scholarship holder during their whole research stay (12 months for research fellows and post-docs or 36 months for PhD scholarship holders). You agree to integrate the scholarship holder into your team and provide good research conditions (lab space and access to infrastructure, library etc.). PhD thesis supervisors should do their utmost to ensure that adequate funding is available after the scholarship so that the thesis can be completed within a reasonable timeframe (1 or 2 additional years maximum).

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You do not find the answer to your question.

Please carefully read the eligibility criteria and conditions on our website www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng