Application guidelines for the Forschungskredit 2021: Postdoc

Valid only for the application period 2021 (submission deadline 1 February 2021).

The team at the UZH Grants Office will be glad to help you if you have questions about applying for funding: support@research.uzh.ch, phone 044 634 48 27, https://www.research.uzh.ch/en/funding/postdoc/fkpostdoc.html

1. General terms

Funding from the Forschungskredit allows the University of Zurich to support junior scholars who would like to carry out a research project at UZH. Primarily salary funds are granted in order to provide researchers with protected research time for their project. There are two types of funding: Candoc for PhD candidates and Postdoc for postdoctoral researchers and scholars working on their habilitation.

1.1 Individual requirements

Eligible for funding are Postdocs and habilitation candidates (until conferral of habilitation) who are at the time of submission

- employed by the University of Zurich, or
- affiliated with the UZH due to their planned research project (in consultation with the future institute).

Not eligible for funding are assistant professors, externally funded assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors.

Important: Please take note of the additional information and regulations of the faculties in the annex to the guidelines.

1.2 Outset and duration of funding

The duration of project funding is 24 months at the most. The project must begin on the first day of a given month. Projects can begin on 1 August 2021 at the earliest and on 1 August 2022 at the latest.

1.3 Expenses covered

Postdoctoral researchers and habilitation candidates can request funding for the following:

- their own salary
- the salary of a PhD candidate (or another co-worker)
- funds for material and travel that are essential for the project but cannot be obtained any other way (see 5.4)

Applicants may request a sum of CHF 225,000 at the most. According to experience, the amount granted is between CHF 50,000 and 100,000.
2. Application procedure

2.1 Submission deadline
The submission deadline for applications is 1 February 2021 at 17:00:00 (CET).

2.2 Evaluation and decision
Documents must be filled in completely and submitted on time.
After the formal examination has been carried out by the UZH Grants Office, the applications will be evaluated by the respective Faculty’s representatives in the UZH Research Committee. Members of the UZH Committee for Academic Career Development as well as members of the Faculty’s Research Committees or of the Faculty’s Committees for Academic Career Development may be brought in to support the representatives in the application review process.
The following four aspects are considered:
- The applicant’s qualifications
- The applicant’s potential to pursue an academic career
- The scientific value of the project
- The project’s original and innovative qualities
The final decision is made by the UZH Research Committee based on the evaluation of the applications and with special regard to the available means. The budget available to each faculty is determined beforehand based on an allocation formula.

2.3 Notification
After the committee meeting, a provisional list of approved projects will be published on the Forschungskredit’s website (approximately mid of June 2021). The binding decision will be communicated to the applicants by the end of June 2021.

3. Information on applying

3.1 Language of application
The application can be written in German or English (for exceptions, see the additional information and regulations of the faculties in the annex).

3.2 Electronic application
Applications are submitted electronically. Submission on the application platform is open from 1 December 2020. The link to the application platform will be published on our website: https://www.research.uzh.ch/en/funding/postdoc/fkpostdoc.html

Applicants have to log in using their UZH Shortname and their WebPass password¹. Applicants who do not yet have a UZH Shortname first have to register on the application platform and log in using their e-mail-address.
There are three steps to submitting an application:

¹ https://www.zi.uzh.ch/de/support/identitaet-zugang/manage-password.html
3.2.1 Creating application and inviting reference persons

After logging in to the application platform, create a new Postdoc application. An application consists of your entries in the form (see 4.), the documents you upload (see 5.) and the reference letters submitted directly by the reference persons. Reference letters cannot be viewed by applicants but are integral parts of the application. They are required for each application submitted (including applications for extension or revised applications).

You have to register at least one reference person (Button Reference person: New). You may, but do not have to, register a second reference person. In the reference letter, the reference person should comment on the applicant's academic qualifications and, if possible, the planned project.

After registering the reference person, you must send him or her an invitation e-mail using the Invite button. The e-mail contains a link for the submission of the reference letter. Please track the status of the reference letters and, if necessary, use the Remind button to send up to two reminder e-mails to the reference persons.

The submission deadline for reference letters is 1 February 2021, 17:00:00 (CET) as well. Since you can only submit your application definitively after the reference letters have been submitted, you should inform the reference persons in advance and, if necessary, remind them early enough.

3.2.2 Editing application and reference persons

You can edit the entries in the form, the documents, and the reference persons until the definitive submission of the application. Check the complete PDF of the application before definitive submission. It will be made available in this form to the Research Committee for evaluation (including reference letters).

Deleting or replacing reference persons is only possible as long as they have not yet submitted their reference letter. Contact details of the reference person can only be changed until the invitation has been sent. If you want to make changes after sending the invitation or replace the reference person with a new one, delete the reference person with the Delete button and register a new reference person.

3.2.3 Definitive submission of application

The definitive submission of the complete application must be done explicitly by 1 February 2021 at 17:00:00 (CET) at the latest (Submit button). The definitive submission can only be done once the form contains all necessary information and the required documents as well as the invited reference letters are on the application platform (corresponding buttons are green). When submitting your application, you have to confirm that you have taken note of these guidelines, that your application is complete and all information is accurate, and that you have written the application on your own and in compliance with the principles of scientific integrity.

Applications that have not been submitted definitively will not be considered. Please complete and definitively submit your application as early as possible. An extension of the submission deadline due to server overload is not possible.

Once the application has been submitted definitively, it is no longer possible to edit the application incl. the reference persons. Please do not send a hard copy of your application.

3.3 Confirmation of receipt

After your application undergoes a routine assessment, you will receive a confirmation of receipt by e-mail (4 weeks after the submission deadline at the latest). Please note that the application is no longer visible to you during the assessment phase.

3.4 Applications for extension

Please refer to the additional information of the faculties (see annex). Applications for extensions can only be submitted for projects that have already been funded by the Forschungskredit. They are processed with all official calls for proposals and must be submitted with the same documents necessary for a first-time application. In your research proposal, you should summarize the results of your research to date and discuss planned research activities.
4. Application form

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<td>Work address (UZH):</td>
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<td>Correspondence address:</td>
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<td>Salaries</td>
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<td>Salaries for PhD candidates</td>
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<td>PhD 1st year: CHF 47,040</td>
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<td>PhD 2nd year: CHF 48,540</td>
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<td>PhD 3rd/4th year: CHF 50,040</td>
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<td>Salaries for co-workers</td>
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<td>Benefits paid by the employer will be added automatically to the gross salary (+15%).</td>
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<td>Funds for material and travel</td>
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<td>Other applications for funding</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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2 Applicants from the following joint institutes, centers or associated institutes choose the faculty indicated in brackets: Centre for Ethics: Ethics Research Institute (Phil.), Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine (Med.), Institute for Social Ethics (Theol.) / Department of Biochemistry (Med.) / Department of Molecular Mechanisms of Disease (Vet.) / Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Prevention Institute (Med.) / Institute for Biomedical Engineering (Med.) / Institute of Experimental Immunology (Med.) / Institute of Laboratory Animal Science (Med.) / Institute of Medical Virology (Med.) / Institute of Molecular Cancer Research (Med.) / Institute of Parasitology (Vet.) / Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology (Med.) / Institute of Physiology (Med.) / Schweizer Institut für Sucht- und Gesundheitsforschung (Phil.).
5. Documents

You can upload the following documents as a PDF file:

- Research proposal (see 5.1)
- Resume/CV
- List of published work
- Copies of diplomas (see 5.2)
- Confirmation letter by institute or clinic (see 5.3)

If required:
- Budget of requested funds for material and travel (see 5.4)
- Approval(s) by the cantonal ethics committee / Swissmedic / BAG (see 5.5)
- Approval(s) by the cantonal veterinary office / BAFU (see 5.6)

Previously uploaded documents can be deleted or replaced by newer versions.

Please consider the following when you upload documents:

| Only PDF files will be accepted (please no .doc, .jpg, .tiff, etc.). There is a limit of 15 MB per document. Do not upload password-protected documents. |

5.1 Research proposal

The research proposal is the main part of your application and provides a detailed description of your project. The proposal should identify clearly what your work entails and what methods you will employ.

The entire research proposal should be 10 pages at the most (illustrations, spreadsheets and formulae included, but excluding the bibliography) and must contain a font size of at least 11 points and a single line spacing as a minimum.

Please discuss the following points:

1. Objectives of your project
2. Background information on your project and the current state of research in the area. Please refer to key publications.
3. Planned research activities (experimental approach, methods, data collection, general schedule, possible assistants or cooperation with other institutions);
4. Available resources (infrastructure, personnel, financing) (see 5.3)
5. Significance of the expected results of your project (acquisition of knowledge, possible applications)

5.2 Copies of diplomas

Please submit copies of your doctoral certificate, your Master’s certificate, and your Bachelor’s certificate, incl. transcript of records or final grades (if issued). If you do not have the doctoral certificate at the time of submission, please submit the latest transcript of records, a document showing that you are eligible to the take the doctoral exam, or a corresponding confirmation from your supervisor.

5.3 Confirmation letter by institute or clinic

Please submit a confirmation letter written by the supervisor at the institute or clinic where you will carry out your project. The letter should confirm that your project will be affiliated with the institute or clinic and that the infrastructure needed to carry out your project (e.g. equipment, rooms, etc.) is available to you.
5.4 **Budget of requested funds for material and travel**

1. Material of permanent value: Costs for equipment and instruments as well as parts to build or upgrade equipment and systems that will be purchased specifically for the planned project.
2. Expendable items, upkeep and renting apparatuses and machines.
3. Expenses for fieldwork and travel.
4. Varia: costs for services, compensating test persons, etc.

Please note that costs for computer hardware/software as well as books and journals that are part of the basic equipment of an institute, and phone charges **cannot be applied for and financed by the Forschungskredit**.

5.5 **Approval(s) by the cantonal ethics committee / Swissmedic / BAG**

Are you planning to perform research on humans or on human embryonic stem cells which requires - according to law - an approval of the cantonal ethics committee or of other authorities (e.g., Swissmedic, BAG)? **If yes, please submit complete copies of these approvals valid for the funding period.** If these approvals are still pending, please hand them in by the start date of your project at the latest. Funding can only be started once all necessary and valid approvals have been obtained.

For research involving humans without legal requirement for ethical approval, a voluntary ethical review from the faculty’s ethics committee is recommended for quality assurance purposes.

5.6 **Approval(s) by the cantonal veterinary office / BAFU**

Are you planning to perform research on animals or on genetically modified organisms or pathogens which requires - according to law - an approval of the cantonal veterinary office or of other authorities (e.g., BAFU)? **If yes, please submit complete copies of these approvals valid for the funding period (Veterinary Office: Form B).** If these approvals are still pending, please hand them in by the start date of your project at the latest. Funding can only be started once all necessary and valid approvals have been obtained.
Anhang / Annex

Zusätzliche Informationen und Bestimmungen der Fakultäten / Additional information and regulations of the faculties

zur Wegleitung zum Forschungskredit / to the Forschungskredit guidelines

| A1: Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät / Faculty of Economics, Business Administration and IT (WWF) | S. 8 |
| A2: Medizinische Fakultät / Faculty of Medicine (MeF) | S. 9 |
| A3: Vetsuisse-Fakultät / Vetsuisse-Faculty (VSF) | S. 10 |
| A4: Philosophische Fakultät / Faculty of Arts (PhF) | S. 11/12 |
| A5: Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät / Faculty of Science (MNF) | S. 13 |

Die Theologische Fakultät und die Rechtswissenschaftliche Fakultät haben keine zusätzlichen Informationen und Bestimmungen erlassen. / The Faculties of Theology (ThF) and Law (RWF) did not define any additional information and guidelines.
A1. Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät / Faculty of Economics, Business Administration and Information Technology

About the „Forschungskredit“ (FK)

The FK is a competitive and popular funding instrument of the University of Zurich to support young scientists. It was created to lay ground for future careers in research and is therefore focused on excellence in research.

As the number of applications at the WWF has increased significantly in the past years, the volume of requested funds often exceeds the available financial resources. This is an indicator of an active and competitive research climate at our faculty and of established scientific quality.

The WWF considers the FK an award of excellence to support high quality proposals in the areas of Economics, Business Administration, Banking and Finance and Information Technology.

About the WWF policy

Applicants who are interested in applying for the FK should consider the following WWF policies in addition to the general FK guidelines.

1. Both WWF PhD students and postdoctoral researchers are eligible to apply for FK grants. Postdoctoral researchers are expected to have demonstrated their potential for an academic career at the time of application.

2. Permanent faculty members are not permitted to apply for FK grants.

3. Research proposals must be written independently by the candidate and should express the candidate’s own research ideas.

4. Candidates should demonstrate above average performance in their academic work.

5. Applications should meet the expected scientific quality criteria of the candidate’s field of study.

6. Applications should demonstrate the candidate’s strong connection to the University of Zurich.

7. The WWF considers FK grants to be starting funding for talented young scientists. Proposals from applicants who are already funded from other institutions or external funding sources, such as SNF, will not be considered.

8. Awarded grants typically support the salary of the recipient for approximately 1 year, subject to the overall resources available and competition for funding in a given year. Consumables and other research expenses are only funded in exceptionally well-justified situations.

9. A candidate may only be awarded an FK grant once. Follow-up applications are not considered.

10. Candidates are required to provide the name of their supervisor as well as a referrer from outside of UZH (mandatory). Candidates may also be asked to submit an additional UZH-external reference letter after the submission deadline.
A2. Medizinische Fakultät / Faculty of Medicine

The Forschungskredit is a competitive funding instrument. The Forschungskommission of the Faculty of Medicine is strongly committed to selecting outstanding scientists with clear academic potential; therefore, receiving a Forschungskredit-grant is a distinction of excellence. The following rules apply without exception.

General rules

1. Forschungskredit-grants are only awarded to PhD students or Postdocs who are distinguished by above-average performance.

2. Successful applicants must have shown mobility between PhD/Postdoc. Mobility between Master/PhD is not required but preferable.

3. Research proposals must be written independently by the applicant and should be based on the applicant’s own ideas.

4. Awarded grants typically cover the salary of the grantee for approximately 1 year. Attending congresses, traveling, publication costs, salaries other than the applicant’s own salary or consumables are not funded.

5. A candidate can only receive an FK grant once. Follow-up applications are not considered.

PhD students (CanDoc)

1. Successful applicants should distinguish themselves by above-average performances during their studies and/or in their first scientific work.

2. Successful applicants must be part of (or have been accepted by) a PhD program of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School or the Medical Faculty of the University of Zurich at the time of application.

3. Awarded grants typically cover the grantee's own salary for approximately 1 year and do usually not exceed CHF 60’000.

Postdocs (PostDoc)

1. Successful applicants distinguish themselves in above-average performances in their scientific work, including publications and acquisition of competitive extramural funding.

2. Successful applicants can have worked on the postdoctoral level for maximally 5 years at the time of submission of a Forschungskredit application.

3. Awarded grants typically cover the grantee's own salary for approximately 1 year and do usually not exceed CHF 100’000.
A3. Vetsuisse-Fakultät / Vetsuisse Faculty

Applicants from the Vetsuisse Faculty should consider the following policy in addition to the “Forschungskredit” guidelines.

The Forschungskredit aims to encourage outstanding young scientists to prepare for a future career as independent researchers. Therefore, proposals have to be written independently by the applicant. The applications need to be submitted in English.

Grant proposals typically cover salaries for approximately 1 year and, if funding allows, may also cover consumables to some extent. Attending congresses, traveling and publication costs are not funded.

Two categories of applicants are possible:

- **CanDoc**: Talented PhD students presenting an original project. Successful applicants should distinguish themselves by good performances during their initial scientific work. Candidates doing their PhD in the PhD program of the Graduate School Bern (GCB) have to be registered with the University of Zurich to be eligible for the Forschungskredit (please see: https://www.vet.uzh.ch/de/studium/doktorat/phd-programm/dr-sc-med-vet.html). Candidates at the level of the veterinary thesis (Dr. med. vet.) are not considered.

- **PostDoc**: Postdoctoral fellows, Assistants or Oberassistants (who are not yet principal applicants of a SNSF grant) with good publication record and excellent potential for an academic career. PostDocs should present an original project based on their own ideas. They can apply for their salary or for the salary of a doctoral student. Applications from tenured faculty members and from permanent staff are not considered.

New applications from previous awardees (including direct follow-up applications to ongoing projects) will not be considered.
A4. Philosophische Fakultät / Faculty of Arts (for English, see p. 12)

Generelle Bestimmungen


- Es muss eine enge Verbindung der Antragstellenden zur UZH nachgewiesen werden. Mindestens ein Referenzschreiben muss von einer Person aus dem Kreis der ordentlichen und ausserordentlichen Professoren/Professorinnen, der Assistenzprofessoren/-professorinnen oder der SNF-/ERC-Förderungsprofessoren/-professorinnen der UZH verfasst werden und das Projekt muss schwerpunktmässig an der UZH durchgeführt werden.


- Unterstützungsgesuche für den Abschluss von Qualifikationsarbeiten und Projekten, die bereits anderweitig erheblich gefördert worden sind, werden nicht bewilligt.

- Falls Bewerberinnen und Bewerber schon in Forschungsprojekten gearbeitet haben bzw. Förderung erhielten, müssen die Dauer und die Art der bisherigen Förderung im Lebenslauf eindeutig ausgewiesen sein.

- Eine gleichzeitige Einreichung des Projekts beim Forschungskredit und bei UZH Doc.Mobility bzw. SNF Early Postdoc.Mobility wird nicht empfohlen, da sich die Zielsetzungen der beiden Nachwuchsförderungsinstrumente unterscheiden.

Candoc


- Verlängerungen werden nur in sehr gut begründeten Ausnahmefällen und höchstens für 6 Monate bewilligt.

Postdoc

- Es können Anstellungen von höchstens 80% beantragt werden.

- Es werden keine Verlängerungen bewilligt.

- Postdocs und Oberassistierende, die bereits eine Anstellung an der UZH haben, können eine Erhöhung ihres Forschungspensums um maximal 20% und für eine begrenzte Zeit (höchstens 1 Jahr) beantragen. Dies gilt nicht für Projekte, die anderweitig erheblich gefördert worden sind. Es muss ein Forschungsplan eingereicht werden, in dem der zu bearbeitende Projektteil dargestellt wird.
A4. Philosophische Fakultät / Faculty of Arts (for German, see p. 11)

General Provisions

- Grants from the Forschungskredit are awarded solely to cover the salary costs of applicants; applications for other types of personnel funding will not be approved. In exceptional cases, non-personnel funds may be approved to cover field expenses to a limited extent. No funding is approved for participation in conferences.

- Applicants must demonstrate a close connection to UZH. Applications must be supported by at least one reference letter from a full professor, associate professor, assistant professor or SNSF / ERC assistant professor; the applicant’s project must be carried out primarily at UZH.

- Advise the relevant chair, department, or institute about your application and ensure that any support offered by the chair, department, or institute is clearly mentioned in your reference letter. This is important from both a content and practical perspective, especially if your research project requires the use of specific infrastructure such as labs or a working space at the chair, department, or institute. Because space at certain UZH facilities is very limited, such requirements must be agreed in advance with the relevant chair, head of department, or head of institute.

- Applications for funding to complete qualifying papers and projects that already receive substantial support from other bodies will not be approved.

- Applicants who have worked on supported research projects in the past must clearly detail the duration and type of support in their Curriculum Vitae.

- It is not advisable to simultaneously submit your project to both the Forschungskredit and the UZH Doc.Mobility or SNSF Early Postdoc.Mobility, as these funding instruments for academic career development pursue different aims.

Candoc

- PhD theses are generally viewed as the starting point of an academic career; these generally commence shortly after completion of a master’s degree and are supported by the Forschungskredit. If a longer period of time has elapsed between your most recent university degree and the commencement of your doctoral thesis, provide a brief explanation of how your time away from studies relates to your PhD plans. This is relevant partly because each application must be assessed in relation to the applicant’s age.

- Extensions are only approved in exceptional, highly justified cases and for no longer than six months.

Postdoc

- Applications may be submitted for an employment level of up to 80%.

- No extensions are approved.

- Postdoctoral researchers and senior teaching and research assistants who are already employed at the University of Zurich may apply to increase the employment level of their research position by a maximum of 20% for a limited period of time (maximum one year). This does not apply to projects that already receive substantial funding from other bodies. Applicants must submit a research proposal that details the project component to be completed.
A5. Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät / Faculty of Science

Candoc

1. The application must include own research ideas of the applicant and has to be written independently by herself/himself. In order to apply, applicants must have at least an invitation to an application interview at one of the UZH PhD programs.

2. Financial support of an application may include the salary of the applicant plus funds for consumables (on a limited scale). The allocation of funds will prioritize salaries over other requested funds.

3. PhD students will be supported from the FK for a maximum duration of 2 years. Proposals from applicants who have already obtained 2 years of funding will not be considered.

4. Teaching requirements according to the ordinance for obtaining a doctoral degree (‘Promotionsverordnung’) as well as regulations of the PhD candidate’s graduate school apply.

Postdoc

1. Postdocs applying for the Forschungskredit should distinguish themselves by above average performances in their scientific work. The application must include own research ideas of the applicant and has to be written independently by herself/himself.

2. Postdocs should not have worked longer than 5 years (full time equivalent) at the postdoctoral level at the time of submission of a Forschungskredit application. Applicants who obtained their PhD at UZH and wish to continue working as a postdoc in the same research group must explain why a change of institution or of research group within UZH is not possible.

3. Financial support of an application may include the salary of the applicant plus funds for consumables (on a limited scale). The allocation of funds will prioritize salaries over other requested funds.

4. Funds for appointment of technical staff for the realization of a project will not be considered.

5. Postdocs will be supported from the FK for a maximum duration of 2 years. Proposals from applicants who have already obtained 2 years of postdoc funding from the FK will not be considered.