

Guidelines for the ETH Zurich - IDEA League Mobility Grants

October 2024

Overview

Many postdoctoral and established researchers (“Oberassistent/innen”) at ETH Zurich have managed to obtain their own funding through fellowships or grants from various sources. These fellowships or grants allow them to conduct their own research projects and support them on their way towards academic independence.

ETH Zurich offers these postdoctoral and established researchers the opportunity to spend a research period at one or more of the IDEA League¹ partner universities TU Delft, RWTH Aachen, Chalmers University and Politecnico di Milano. The research stays are between two weeks and three months long. The Mobility Grants are intended to expand the scientific portfolio and network of the researchers and should benefit their work at ETH Zurich or their career development. Thereby, the grants should enable and encourage the use of research infrastructure at other IDEA League universities and/or collaborations with researchers at these universities. A connection to research infrastructures is desirable, but not required. The research stay can also be used to start or work on joint projects. The Mobility Grant is competitive with only five grants available each year.

Funding

The Mobility Grants are awarded for a research stay of between two weeks and three months, which can be split.

A lump sum of CHF 5'000 will be awarded per month. A maximum of CHF 15'000 can be awarded per grant. For shorter stays, the funding will be adjusted to the duration of the research stay and the expected expenses specified in the budget.

The following costs may be covered through a Mobility Grant:

- travel (Economy class) and accommodation;
- access/user/service fees for research infrastructure, machine time, technology platforms;
- consumables and other research costs.

The allocated funding can only be used for expenses incurred during the research stay. No salaries can be paid through the Mobility Grant and ETH employment cannot be suspended for its duration.

¹ The IDEA League is a strategic alliance between five leading European universities of science and technology. Through cross-border, bottom-up collaboration they share knowledge, experience and resources. The current members are: ETH Zurich, TU Delft, RWTH Aachen, Chalmers University and Politecnico di Milano.

Submission

Eligibility criteria

Scientific staff employed at ETH Zurich with a non-permanent contract (i.e. postdoctoral and established researchers), who have obtained their own fellowship or grant to work on their own project at ETH Zurich, are eligible to apply.

Holders of the following or similar fellowships/grants are eligible:

- ETH Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Branco Weiss Fellowship
- SNSF Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship
- SNSF Ambizione Grant
- SNSF Postdoctoral Fellowship Return Grant
- SNSF PRIMA Grant
- AXA Fellows, Schmidt Science Fellows, EMBO Grantees, Banting Fellows.

This is not an exhaustive list; for fellowships/grants not on this list the Grants Office needs to be contacted to clarify eligibility.

Fellows/grantees are eligible to apply for a Mobility Grant also after their funding has expired, as long as they are still employed at ETH Zurich for the entire duration of the Mobility Grant. The research stay can be performed during the active fellowship/grant period or afterwards.

The research stay must be performed at one or more of the IDEA League partner universities of ETH Zurich:

- TU Delft, The Netherlands
- RWTH Aachen, Germany
- Chalmers University, Sweden
- Politecnico di Milano, Italy.

The planned research stay must be between two weeks and three months long. The grant can be split and more than one partner university can be visited for a maximum period of three months in total. The research stay can begin at the earliest after the receipt of the decision letter and cannot be awarded retrospectively.

The Mobility Grant can only be granted once to any researcher during their employment at ETH Zurich.

It is possible to resubmit a Mobility Grant application following a rejection once.

Applications not complying with the eligibility criteria will be rejected on formal grounds.

Application

Applications must be written in English and sent by email as a single PDF file to the ETH Zurich Grants Office to ethfellows@sl.ethz.ch.

The application must include the following:

- A short abstract of the planned work – 150 words max.
- A description of the planned activities at the IDEA League host university, including the rationale for the visit, the added value for the ongoing work at ETH Zurich and/or the career development of the researcher – 2 pages max.
- An itemized, tabular budget with a justification for the requested funding.
- A short CV, including a progress report on the awarded project / fellowship and, if applicable, a description of the ongoing work done after the end of this project – 2 page max.
- Letter(s) of commitment of the host(s) at the prospective host institution(s) with a confirmation that they will provide support, office space and access to the lab and required infrastructure.
- A short letter of agreement by the ETH host professor confirming that they agree to the research stay and its scope.

A template for the application is provided and available on the website of the Grants Office.

Deadlines

Requests can be submitted anytime. There are four cut-off dates per year, after which applications will be evaluated: 1 March, 1 June, 1 September and 1 December.

Notification of decisions (approval or rejection) will be communicated to the applicant within two months after the submission deadline. Mobility Grants can start immediately after formal approval, but no later than six months after the reception of the decision letter.

Evaluation

The applications are reviewed by the ETH Zurich Grants Office. Members of the ETH Zurich Research Commission will be consulted if needed. Decisions are final and there is no possibility of appeal.

The evaluation criteria are:

- The rationale and scientific quality of the planned activities;
- the relevance and added value for the ongoing work and/or the career of the researcher;
- the suitability of the host institute/group for the planned activities;
- progress of the awarded fellowship/grant project so far.

In line with DORA^[1], achievements will be assessed on the base of qualitative evaluations of a diverse range of research outputs and activities.

Use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies:

The use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies such as large language models, chatbots, and image creators in the preparation of a Mobility Grant proposal is permitted in principle, but at the

[1] The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, <https://sfдора.org/>

applicant's own risk. It must be disclosed in a cover letter by providing detailed information about which generative AI tools were used in writing the proposal and for what purpose and to what extent.

Please note that the use of generative AI tools may raise concerns regarding intellectual property and scientific misconduct. Applicants are fully responsible for the content and accuracy of their proposal. They must adhere to the principles of research integrity that apply at ETH Zurich.

Since this extends to any and all parts of a proposal produced by an AI tool, applicants must ensure that all sources are cited appropriately and correctly, and that the documents do not contain factually incorrect, misleading, falsified, plagiarized, or fabricated information. The applicants are therefore advised to exercise maximum caution when using generative AI or AI-assisted technologies in the development of their proposal.

Gender aspects

ETH Zurich strives to promote gender equality in scientific research by integrating the gender dimension into the research content in all fields of research.

If the proposed activities involves human subjects (e.g., as patients, consumers, users or as citizens in surveys), gender must be consistently taken into account from the proposal to the research and dissemination phase as well as in the experimental design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the outcomes. If gender aspects are not addressed a justification must be supplied.

Research not involving human subjects should adopt the principles of gender-sensitive research where appropriate (e.g., fundamental research on genomics, development of materials for use in the biomedical sector, product design).

Ethical issues

The research carried out in the framework of the research stay must comply with ETH Zurich's and the host university's scientific integrity and research data management regulations. The applicant must state if the intended activities require authorization or notification and seek all necessary authorizations. This applies in particular to research on humans, research on human embryonic stem cells, research on animals, research on GMO or pathogens and research in developing countries.

Post-grant processes

If a Mobility Grant cannot be started as planned and/or at the planned date, approval for the amended plans must be requested from the Grants Office. The research stay can be started as soon as the approval letter has been received and no longer than six months after the submission date.

The IP rights belong to ETH Zurich. ETH Zurich must be indicated as the institutional affiliation for all publications resulting from research conducted within the framework of the research stay. Whenever possible, Open Access should be granted to publications resulting from the Mobility Grant, as per ETH's Open Access Policy. Publication fees (APCs) are taken over by the ETH Library for the most important journals. Otherwise, the granted Mobility Grant funding may be used to cover them. The Mobility Grant must be mentioned in publications, e.g., in the form "This work was supported by an IDEA League Mobility Grant from ETH Zurich".

Grantees are requested to send a short written report on the research stay to the ETH Zurich Grants Office within six weeks after the stay is finished (about one page) to ethfellows@sl.ethz.ch. It should include a financial summary, a description of the achievements during the research stay, a list of research outputs, as well as a statement on the benefits of the Mobility Grant to the researchers' ongoing work or professional development.

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