

# Guidelines for ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellowships

October 2024

## Overview

The ETH AI Center is ETH Zurich's central hub for artificial intelligence. It will lead the way towards trustworthy, accessible, and inclusive AI systems for the benefit of society.

The ETH AI Center brings together researchers of AI foundations, applications, and implications across all departments and disciplines. With an interdisciplinary faculty of more than 110 professorships, its own premises and new fellowship programs, the center reinforces ETH's strong position in researching this key technology. The Center teams up with the best AI research institutions across Europe & beyond to accelerate progress, to support start-ups & industry collaborations, and to foster the next generation of AI researchers, transformational leaders, and entrepreneurs.

We believe that AI foundations need to co-evolve with impact areas and that breakthroughs in some impact areas will require new AI foundations. The fellowship program is intended to give highly motivated post-doctoral researchers with excellent track records the opportunity of conducting "research with impact" to shape the future of AI. Fellows are selected in a competitive process to ensure that the researchers with the best fit and highest potential are chosen for the 5 - 8 fellowships available each year. The Post-Doctoral Fellows will be supervised by one of ETH AI Center's Core Faculty, and collaborate with members of the ETH AI Center Associated Faculty.

ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellows are expected to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the center. All Post-Doctoral Fellows across various disciplines will be co-located at the premises of the ETH AI Center and collaboration with other disciplines is highly encouraged. The center also offers to strengthen their career path through optional entrepreneurial or industry activities that provides them with valuable hands-on experience to turn their research into practical impact.

## Submission

### Eligibility criteria

At the time of the submission deadline, candidates must hold a doctorate (PhD) or will complete their doctorate within the next 10 months in computer science, physics, engineering, applied mathematics, or other relevant fields for artificial intelligence.

## Application

Applications are encouraged from candidates with a keen interest in interdisciplinary research on AI topics. Applications must be submitted through <https://ai.ethz.ch/apply> and need to include:

- a detailed CV including a list of publications and awards (if applicable)
- a short research statement (1-2 pages) outlining the intended research proposal and intended collaborators
- scanned transcripts of certificates (Doctorate, Master's degree, other degrees)
- a short video of yourself (2-5 minutes) in which you describe your research interests for the fellowship
- names and email addresses for 2-3 individuals who can provide reference letters. Please ask your referees to submit their reference letters within the application deadline.

Calls for applications will be published approx. once per year. The exact date is communicated on the ETH AI Center web page (<https://ai.ethz.ch/>).

## Evaluation

### Timeline of the evaluation procedure

Week Task

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|-------|---|
| 0-7   | Submission of applications  |
| 8-12  | Assessment of applications by the ETH AI Center faculty members according to pre-defined criteria (see below)     |
| 14    | Decision on short-listing of candidates by the ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Selection Committee                    |
| 15    | Invitation of short-listed candidates for an interview  |
| 17    | Virtual symposium and interviews  |
| 20-21 | Decision on selected fellows by the ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Selection Committee                               |
| 22-24 | Information of the applicants and the corresponding post-doctoral supervisors about the final decision via email. |

The evaluation consists of two steps. First, the written applications will be evaluated by the Post-Doctoral Selection Committee, the results of which will be communicated to the applicants within two months after the submission deadline. Candidates whose applications pass the first step will be invited to an interview (virtual or on-site).

In the interview, applicants will give a short presentation about a research project. Subsequently, they will be asked questions about their scientific development to date, the proposed research project, the particular strengths and skills they would add to the ETH AI Center, as well as about their future career plans. In some cases, candidates may be asked to solve problems or write a few lines of code during the interview.

In case of a positive decision, the candidates will be informed about their prospective post-doctoral supervisor and the start of the fellowship.

In case of a negative decision, a resubmission for an ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellowship application is possible.

## Evaluation criteria

The decision on receiving an ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellowship is based on a strict, quality-based evaluation process. Applications will be assessed against criteria mainly addressing the candidate's scientific excellence, innovativeness of the research proposal, and fit with the interdisciplinary research approach of the ETH AI Center.

The criteria are based on the CV including track record of peer-reviewed publications, and the letters of reference, and the online application form, and include:

- previous performance and potential
- track record relative to opportunities and career stage
- competence for the selected AI research area
- uniqueness and quality of the research proposal
- fit of the ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellowship with the career goals of the applicant
- the compliance of the research proposal with the vision of the ETH AI Center
- strengths & skills relevant to the interdisciplinary approach of the ETH AI Center
- intended contributions to the center's interdisciplinary community & culture

## Funding

The duration of the ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellowship is two years. ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellows will be employed according to the regulations of ETH Zurich. Salaries are paid according to the ETH standard (100%).

## Obligations

To monitor progress and improve the program, ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellows are expected to provide documentation of the progress of their research project as required by the Center. ETH AI Center Post-Doctoral Fellows are expected to contribute to the ETH AI Center community and actively participate in workshops, summer schools and other events of the Center.

## Other

The ETH AI Center seeks to increase the number of women in areas where they are underrepresented and therefore explicitly encourages women to apply. Furthermore, the ETH AI

Center is committed to increasing the number of individuals with disabilities in its workforce and therefore encourages respective applications.