

Annex 4: Flexibility grants (previously 120% support grants)

Clause 2.18 General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations;
Version of 3 November 2020

4.1 Principle and objectives

¹ The SNSF awards flexibility grants to help researchers reconcile their research activities and academic career with care duties.

² To junior researchers with care duties who have to meet exacting professional demands, the SNSF offers a grant towards the costs of hiring a support person and towards child care costs (Flexibility Grants) pursuant to the following provisions.¹

³ The grants are awarded within the scope of SNSF research grants for the benefit of either grantees or postdocs and doctoral students employed under the funded project.

⁴ The two measures "Grant towards hiring a support person" and "Grant towards child care costs" may be combined.

4.2 Grant towards hiring a support person

¹ The grant towards hiring a support person allows the recipient to reduce his/her work-time percentage from 80%-100% to a minimum quota of 60% and to simultaneously hire a support person (scientific or technical staff member or assistant) for the research project funded by the SNSF.

² The SNSF covers part of the support person's salary. Its contribution amounts to a maximum of 20% of the gross salary of the person benefiting from the flexibility grant recalculated to the gross salary of a full-time (100%) position, augmented by the gross salary amount saved thanks to the reduction in work-time percentage (the latter amount must not exceed 40% of the relevant gross salary of the person benefiting from the flexibility grant).

³ The grant towards hiring a support person may be applied for even if the work-time percentage is not reduced. In such cases, the work-time percentage of the person benefiting from the measure must be 80-100%. The grant towards hiring a support person (scientific or technical staff member or assistant) is limited to 20% of the relevant gross salary of the person benefiting from the flexibility grant.

¹ Amendment of 1 July 2020, in force with immediate effect.

4.3 Child care grant

¹ Grants towards child care costs allow junior researchers to continue their research activities with the shortest possible delay.

² The work-time percentage must correspond to at least 80%. Doctoral students (Clause 4.4 paragraph 1 letter c below) may apply for grants towards child care costs irrespective of their work-time percentage.

4.4 Personal requirements: funding by the SNSF

¹ The following junior researchers may be awarded family grants:

- a. Grant holders under the career funding schemes Ambizione (with salary), PRIMA, Postdoc.Mobility for the return phase and only for child care grants and Doc.CH (for these, letter c also applies);²
- b. SNSF-funded postdocs, pursuant to Clause 7.4 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations, who are employed at a Swiss institution;
- c. SNSF-funded doctoral students who are employed at a Swiss institution; doctoral students are only eligible to receive child care grants.

² The grants may also be applied for within the scope of National Centres of Competence for Research (NCCR). Specific submission and application arrangements in the case of NCCRs are set out in the NCCR Guidelines "Grants for postdocs and doctoral students with family care duties".

4.5 Further personal requirements³

¹ Junior researchers must meet the following additional requirements:

- a. for both types of grant: the junior researcher needs to provide proof of the days on which child care is outsourced. To qualify for the grant, persons with care duties must outsource child care on at least 3 days of every working week for professional reasons, and they must each provide care themselves on no more than 1 day of every working week.⁴ The grant covers children who have not yet finished primary school pursuant to Swiss law⁵. The SNSF may ask for detailed evidence of these circumstances;
- b. for a grant towards hiring a support person: a work quota of at least 60% (0.6 FTE) for cases involving a reduction in working hours, or a work quota of at least 80% (0.8 FTE) if a support person is hired without any concomitant reduction in working hours. Proof of the reduction in working hours and the employment of a support person must be provided; and
- c. for a grant towards child care costs: a work-time percentage of at least 80%. Doctoral students are not required to provide such proof. The requirements pursuant to letter a. must also be met by doctoral students.

² If the two types of grant are combined, the work-time percentage must correspond to at least 80%.

² Amended version of 1 November 2020, in force with immediate effect.

³ Amendment of 1 July 2020, in force with immediate effect.

⁴ The SNSF takes into account the actual child care arrangements. The professional reasons necessitating the outsourcing of child care must be explained. As regards the other person with care duties, these reasons may also comprise irregular working hours, continuing education, incapacity to provide care due to illness/accident, or unemployment.

⁵ The duration of primary school is defined in accordance with Article 6 of the Intercantonal Agreement on Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (HarmoS Agreement) of 14 June 2007. Canton of Ticino: applications may be submitted up to and including the 6th year.

4.6 Submission of applications and deadlines

¹ Applications may be submitted at any time within the scope of an ongoing research project funded by the SNSF, at the earliest on the start date of the project, but no later than four months before the end of the project.

² The grants begin on the start date requested for the Flexibility Grant at the earliest. The earliest possible start date of the grant is the first day of the month in which the application was submitted. Apart from this, no retroactive start date is possible.

³ The applications will be submitted by the corresponding grantee. This shall also be the case if the grant is requested for the benefit of an employee pursuant to Clause 4.4 letters b and c.

⁴ The application must be submitted in electronic form as a supplementary grant application in accordance with the guidelines provided in *mySNF*, and it must contain all mandatory information and enclosures.

4.7 Assessment procedure⁶

¹ Provided the requirements pursuant to Clauses 4.4 and 4.5 are met, the SNSF shall assess whether the measures are warranted. The measures are considered warranted if they enable the researcher to achieve a better balance between his/her ongoing research activities and child care duties and if delays can be kept to a minimum.

² The SNSF may reject the application or lower the requested amount should the measure be deemed unwarranted or only partially warranted.

³ The SNSF will not consider any applications that fail to meet the requirements pursuant to Clauses 4.4-4.6.

4.8 Award and transfer of funds, and extensions⁷

¹ In an initial phase, the grants are awarded for a maximum of 24 months and charged to the overall grant for the approved research project.

² Through submission of a follow-up application, the Flexibility Grant can be easily extended for a second phase until the end of the research project, provided the requirements continue to be met.

³ If the approved research project ends no later than 30 months after the start of the Flexibility Grant, the latter is awarded for the entire duration up to the end of the project.

⁴ Funds are transferred at the request of the corresponding grantee (payment in instalments).

⁵ A follow-up application pursuant to paragraph 2 may also be used to request the extension of a Flexibility Grant based on the extension of the approved research project. Approval depends on whether the person using the Flexibility Grant continues to be employed and meet the requirements during the project extension period.

⁶ Amended based on the decision of the Presiding Board of the National Research Council of 3 November 2020, in force as of 1 January 2021.

⁷ Amended based on the decision of the Presiding Board of the National Research Council of 3 November 2020, in force as of 1 January 2021.

4.9 Eligible costs

¹ In the case of grants towards hiring a support person, the support person's salary is covered by the grant. The SNSF provisions on the employment of personnel apply. The funds saved due to the reduction in work-time percentage are credited to the grant.

² In the case of the grant towards child care costs, only the actual costs of child care by third parties, up to a maximum of CHF 1,000 per child/month, are covered by the SNSF grant. Any contributions towards child care costs which the parents receive from their employers will be deducted.

³ The SNSF offsets any reductions (Clause 4.7 paragraph 2) against the duration and/or amount of the requested grant.

⁴ The entire grant may not exceed CHF 30,000/year.

4.10 Use of the grant and modifications

¹ The grant must be drawn during the funding period of the research project supported by the SNSF.

² Grantees are obliged to inform the SNSF without delay of any circumstances that could change or influence the fulfilment of the grant conditions (Article 39 Funding Regulations). In particular, the SNSF must be informed about any changes to child care arrangements. The SNSF may modify or terminate the grant should the grant conditions no longer be met.

4.11 Reporting

¹ A separate scientific report on the Flexibility Grant is not required. Reporting shall be effected within the scope of the regular scientific report on the SNSF-funded research project

² Accounting will take place within the scope of the preparation of the regular financial report.

4.12 Further provisions

Subject to any specific provisions in this Annex, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations apply.