

7. Employment of staff¹

7.1 Employment of staff; principles

Costs for project employees in research projects fully or partially funded by the SNSF may be charged to the grant, subject to the following conditions. Both the institutions (in particular letters a.-g. below) and the grantees (in particular pursuant to Clause 7.2) are responsible for compliance with these conditions. The institutions

- a. shall employ project staff based on written employment contracts that meet the minimum requirements of the sample employment contract pursuant to Annex 13;
- b. are fully responsible for the employment relationship and for protecting the employees as regards their rights and obligations. In particular, they ensure that the person's integrity is protected, that the ban on discrimination and the gender equality requirement are complied with, and that they are protected against sexual harassment and bullying;
- c. ensure that effective measures have been taken and suitable information provided to prevent and penalise any breaches of research integrity;
- d. fulfil all the duties of an employer and, in particular, settle the social security contributions with the responsible insurances;
- e. support and account for the objectives pursued in funding the position within the relevant research project;
- f. ensure conditions that enable the employee to spend at least as much time as specified by the SNSF doing scientific work for the project; and
- g. comply with the salary ranges and other guidelines (particularly Annex 12) of the SNSF.

7.2 Obligations of the grantees

Grantees are obliged to:

- a. monitor compliance with all provisions applicable to project staff;
- b. send the SNSF all necessary information without delay, in particular personnel-related messages in the event of hires, transfers and salary adjustments and work together with the responsible grant administration office in such cases;
- c. submit copies of employment contracts to the SNSF on demand;
- d. support project staff in matters relating to their academic career, in particular giving sympathetic consideration to applications for career grants² or grant extensions in favour of project

¹ Wording based on the Research Council decision of 24 September 2019, in force since 2 October 2019.

² Flexibility Grant, Mobility Grant for doctoral students, Gender Equality Grant

staff while paying due regard to valid interests and, if justified, submitting such applications to the SNSF; and

- e. fulfil their responsibilities in conflict situations or in the event of any difficulties with project staff in connection with employer institutions and inform the SNSF about important events.

7.3 Project staff: doctoral students

¹ Doctoral students are researchers who collaborate on research work funded by the SNSF and seek to obtain a doctoral degree in connection with their scientific contribution to the said research work. As a rule, their dissertation must be supervised by a grantee who bears responsibility for the funded research work. Applications for SNSF career grants³ may be applied for on behalf of such researchers irrespective of their actual work-time percentage.

² Doctoral students must spend most of their time working on their dissertation and may only be enlisted to perform other tasks for the institution to a minor degree. Completion of the dissertation within the regular timeframe of four years must not be jeopardised.

³ The work-time percentage of doctoral students is defined by the employer. It must generally be appropriate to the task of completing a dissertation within a period of four years. This is based on the presumption that 80-100% of a full-time equivalent position (FTE) is devoted to a dissertation.

⁴ Doctoral students must be compensated in accordance with the relevant salary ranges defined by the SNSF. Employers are entitled to top up the maximum salary granted by the SNSF with their own funds.

⁵ The maximum period of employment for doctoral students funded by the SNSF is four years. The relevant start date for calculating the four-year period is the actual start date of the dissertation, as communicated to the SNSF by the grantee. The four-year time window funded by the SNSF starts one year after the said start date at the latest. This year may be used for preparatory activities linked to the doctoral studies, e.g. attending doctoral schools.

7.4 Project staff: postdocs

¹ Project staff are employed as postdocs if they aim to become scientifically independent and achieve the qualifications required to independently develop and conduct research projects and to assume scientific leadership positions.

² They must make a specific contribution to the research project and work primarily on achieving the said scientific qualifications. SNSF career grants⁴ may be applied for on their behalf.

³ Postdocs must be remunerated in accordance with the relevant salary ranges defined by the SNSF.

⁴ For postdocs, a maximum employment period of five years is chargeable to the SNSF. The relevant start date of the five-year period is the date of the viva voce or of the official acceptance of the dissertation. In the event of any substantiated reasons for delay pursuant to Clause 7.6 paragraph 2, the SNSF shall accept upon request a postponement of the start date by a maximum of one year.

³ Flexibility Grant, Mobility Grant for doctoral students, Gender Equality Grant

⁴ Flexibility Grant, Gender Equality Grant

7.5 Project staff: other employees

¹ Project staff who do not intend to do a doctorate, employees with a doctorate who do not meet the requirements for the postdoc category as regards period of employment and time window as well as technicians and auxiliary staff are engaged as "other employees".

² They must make a specific contribution to the research project. SNSF career grants may not be applied for on behalf of other employees.

³ Other employees must be remunerated in accordance with the relevant rates defined by the SNSF.

⁴ Visiting professors may not be engaged and remunerated as other employees of an SNSF-funded research project.

7.6 Duration of employment, time windows and grant extension

¹ Subject to the maximum funding periods and time windows, project staff of all categories are employed for the duration of the approved research project. The employer is responsible for ensuring that all obligations under Swiss labour legislation in respect of project staff are fulfilled at the end of the project or in the event of the project being abandoned.

² If delays occur during the employment period of doctoral students or postdocs due to the reasons set out below, the time window for the maximum employment duration may be extended by a maximum of one year upon request. In particular, the following delays of at least two months' duration will be taken into account, provided they are substantiated and uninterrupted:

- a. Maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or parental leave;
- b. Inability to work due to illness or accident;
- c. Responsibilities as a carer;
- d. Services that benefit the general public, particularly military or civilian service;
- e. Professional development, particularly internships, clinical work.

³ The extension of time windows due to delays pursuant to paragraph 2 has no effect on the maximum funding periods for doctoral students and postdocs. However, the maximum funding periods are extended by a maximum of one year to cover a period of continued salary payments in case of maternity, paternity, adoption, illness, accident, military service or other services.

⁴ Grants may be extended by a maximum of one year at the grantee's request. Extensions must be proven to be necessary as a result of delays incurred by project employees pursuant to paragraph 2 and are only granted for uninterrupted delays of at least two months' duration. Extensions to cover a period of continued salary payment in the event of maternity, paternity, adoption, illness, accident, military service or other services are generally approved. In justified exceptional cases, the SNSF may approve cost-neutral grant extensions that exceed one year, together with a corresponding extension of the employment duration for project employees.⁵

⁵ If a grant is extended pursuant to paragraph 4, the grantee may submit a new application without the extension phase being affected by the SNSF restrictions concerning multiple parallel grants.

7.7 Salary and social security costs

¹ The salary ranges, flat rates for social security (AHVG/IVG/EOG, BVG, AVIG and UVG) and guidelines for project staff are set out in Annex 12 and are legally binding.

⁵ Inserted based on the Research Council's decision of 9 June 2020, in force as of 1 July 2020.

² Any family or other customary local allowances as well as any contributions to top up the employee's salary are chargeable to the grant, whereas allowances attached to a salary (e.g. local bonuses) and purchases of additional benefits in pension schemes and the like are not. In relation to mandatory non-occupational accident insurance, the SNSF respects the splitting of the contributions between the employer and the employees in accordance with the corresponding local provisions.

³ The SNSF is entitled to forward copies of financial reports to the Federal Social Insurance Office for auditing purposes.

7.8 Continuing salary payments, maternity, paternity and adoption leave

¹ If the employer continues to pay salaries in the event of maternity, paternity, adoption, illness, accident, military service or other services, the SNSF shall follow the usual local rules and cover any resultant additional costs for a maximum of one year. The relevant insurance benefits must be credited to the grant, however.

² Where the usual local rules provide for less than two months adoption leave, the SNSF finances a two-month holiday and continued payment of salary when an infant is placed. The SNSF covers the additional cost incurred due to the extended adoption leave.

³ If it is absolutely necessary to employ a deputy to ensure the successful continuation of the research work during maternity, paternity or adoption leave, the SNSF may approve such an arrangement and bear the corresponding additional costs. These provisions apply mutatis mutandis to deputies.