

Charter for membership in the National Research Council

The National Research Council (NRC) is the scientific body of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The NRC plays a central role in the development and quality assurance of research in Switzerland. Besides fulfilling their duties at their home institutions, the members of the NRC make an indispensable contribution to the SNSF and its academic self-governance. NRC members show scientific excellence in their field and should also have insight into disciplines other than their own, experience as evaluators, and knowledge and interest in science policy and evaluation science. In all their actions NRC members should have an overall open, respectful and constructive attitude, act with integrity, follow ethical standards and avoid conflicts of interests. NRC members must observe the following specific points:

1. Role and tasks of NRC members

- 1.1 The primary task of NRC members is to contribute to the evaluation of proposals in the divisions, specialized committees or other SNSF evaluation bodies. NRC members may be asked to preside over evaluation bodies. In addition, they contribute to developing strategies, for example by helping to design new instruments or by contributing to the multi-annual plan.
- 1.2 NRC members are elected based on their qualities as individuals and not as representatives of institutions.
- 1.3 NRC members bring to the attention of the SNSF the needs, expectations and problems of their research communities. However, NRC members act independently and are not the advocates of their research communities. They are at all times aware that the SNSF's funding policies serve all research communities and disciplines in Switzerland.
- 1.4 NRC members know and follow the SNSF internal rules (and policies for example concerning evaluation, conflicts of interest etc.) and uphold their underlying rationale. For this purpose, the Administrative Office prepares and regularly updates fact sheets with the most important internal rules and policies and important background information and makes these documents available on <https://www.mysnf.ch/dochub>.
- 1.5 If speaking in public or answering questions about the SNSF, NRC members should act in the interest of the SNSF. They should explain the SNSF's official position and its rationale to the best of their ability and refer to the Administrative Office where appropriate.

2. Organisational duties of NRC members and administrative office

- 2.1 Decisions on research proposals are collective resolutions of the evaluation committees. It is therefore crucial that NRC members are present at all or most of the meetings of the evaluation bodies of which they are part.
- 2.2 To ensure the quality of decisions and evaluation meetings, NRC members must hand in their evaluation reports for the proposals assigned to them on time and in the form requested.
- 2.3 NRC members collaborate with the Administrative Office to ensure that the NRC's workload is distributed evenly and according to the expertise of its members. The Administrative Office supports NRC members wherever possible, and the SNSF helps NRC members to free time and organize their work by payments to their institutions.

3. Integrity and behavior of NRC members

- 3.1 NRC members are committed to the principles of scientific integrity.
- 3.2 NRC members must be aware of, and communicate all their potential conflicts of interests. They recognize that conflicts of interest are as much about perception of bias by others, as they are about true bias in decision making.
- 3.3 NRC members follow rules concerning their exclusion from the evaluation and decision process and withdraw whenever potential conflicts of interest exist, without being prompted.
- 3.4 NRC members do not discriminate against anyone in any way based on gender, age, ethnic, national or social background, religion or worldview, sexual orientation, language, disability, political views or social or economic circumstances.
- 3.5 NRC members are respectful in behavior and language towards applicants, NRC colleagues, SNSF staff and all other persons involved in SNSF duties. NRC members do not engage in or tolerate any form of psychological or sexual harassment.
- 3.6 NRC members are bound by official/professional secrecy. They treat information that is not publicly accessible or known as confidential, during and after their period of membership of the RC.
- 3.7 NRC members act in a transparent manner in case of suspicion, accusation or procedure concerning violation of research integrity rules. They accept that NRC membership in such circumstances can harm the reputation of the SNSF and therefore inform the president of the NRC immediately. They accept that their membership in the NRC may be suspended until the conclusion of any investigation, and that, depending on the outcome of the investigation, they may be asked to resign.

4. Resignation

- 4.1 To facilitate the search and election of a suitable successor, members of the NRC must give at least one year's notice of their resignation, unless the resignation is due to unforeseen circumstances.

Final provision

The new member confirms that he/she has taken note of this charter and of the documents on <https://www.mysnf.ch/dochub>