

Guidelines for the “UniBE Initiator Grants”

General information and principles

The “UniBE Initiator Grants” support early career researchers at the University of Bern in the preparation of third-party funding applications post PhD. These applications can be intended for their own funding (personal funding) or for support of their projects (project funding).

Personal requirements (Art. 1 and 5 of the regulations)

Early career researcher with a doctoral degree

Applicants for a UniBE Initiator Grant are early career researchers with a doctoral degree (PhD, medical degree or PhD equivalent).

Early career researchers usually hold one of the following positions:

- Postdoc
- Assistant I
- Senior Research Assistant
- Assistant Physician
- Doctoral students are also eligible to apply, provided they are applying for an SNF Postdoc.Mobility Grant.

Eligibility window after receiving the PhD degree

At the time of the submission of a UniBE Initiator Grant, the completion of the doctorate should be no more than five years ago. The relevant date is the date of the PhD examination/defence.

This time window may be extended if one or more of the following situations apply:

- The main application is being submitted to a career funding scheme where different requirements apply
- There have been family responsibilities such as care duties including parental leave
- There have been interruptions in research activities due to other career-advancing activities e.g., clinical work.

Connection to the University of Bern and letter of support

Persons applying for an UniBE Initiator Grant do not necessarily have to be employed by the University at the time of application. However, for the duration of the UniBE Initiator Grant, an employment contract and/or a workspace at the University of Bern is required.

The following conditions must be confirmed by an institute of the University of Bern in a separate letter of support:

- If the UniBE Initiator Grant will be used to prepare an application for project funding, employment at the University of Bern is required for the planned duration of the main project. In addition, an employment contract and/or a workspace at the University of Bern must be available for the duration of the UniBE Initiator Grant.
- In the case of an application for individual funding, an employment and/or workspace at the University of Bern must be available for the duration of the UniBE Initiator Grant. Additionally, the institute must confirm that the planned main application is in principle supported.

The main application (Art. 1, 2, 5 and 8 of the regulations)

Submitting an application for individual or project funding to an external funding institution (main application) is the aim of a UniBe Initiator Grant. The following principles must be observed:

- The main application must be carried out at the University of Bern, unless it is a mobility grant.
- If it is a mobility grant, the motivation must be stated, taking career planning into account.
- The main application must be submitted within one year or by the earliest possible deadline according to the submission deadlines of the respective funding agency.
- The main application must have a positive impact on the applicant's career development.
- The applicant must be eligible to apply for the main application.

In particular, the following main applications will be supported (however, the restrictions due to Switzerland's lack of association with Horizon Europe and the substitute measures introduced by the SNSF must be taken into account):

- applications within the framework of the Swiss National Science Foundation's career schemes for after the doctorate
- applications for project funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation
- applications to the European Research Council (ERC), especially the Starting Grants
- applications under the Marie Skłodowska Curie Individual Fellowships
- further applications for renowned competitive funding awarded by national and international funding institutions (foundations, funding agencies, etc.)

Note: For these applications, the applicant must clarify the eligibility and the amount of the grant in advance, as this information is often not easily accessible.

The UniBE Initiator Grant Application (Art. 2 and 4 of the regulations)

The UniBe Initiator Grant aims to support the preparation of an application for individual and/or project funding (main application). The UniBE Initiator Grant must be used by the deadline for submission of the main application.

Eligible costs

Applications can be used for personal as well as for project funding. The following cost categories are eligible:

Personal funding:

- the applicant's salary (contract extension, increase in percentage of employment for part-time researchers)
- relief measures (e.g. 120% rule, day care contributions, external teaching assignment)
- Project funding:
- salaries of employees (support staff carrying out activities related to the UniBe Initiator Grant)
- material and general research costs necessary for the research needed to prepare the main application
- field and travel expenses incurred in connection with the preparation of the main application

Applications can be made for both personal and project funding of CHF 20,000 each. However, the maximum amount of an application may not exceed CHF 30,000.

Submission

The application form provided must be used to submit the application. It can be filled out in German or English. All required documents must be submitted as a single PDF in the following order to Andrea Bshary by email (andrea.bshary@unibe.ch):

1. application (no longer than 8 pages)
2. letter of support from an institute of the University of Bern
3. SciCV (This is the new format of the SNF for the generation of a scientific CV. It covers the net academic age and an ORCID-ID that records the full range of scientific achievements. [SNF information page](#))
4. Master's and Doctoral degree certificates
5. additional annexes, unless mandatory, will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal.

Evaluation of the UniBE Initiator Grant application (Art. 7 of the regulations)

The application will be assessed on the following criteria:

Applicant:

- Qualification of the applicant: What is the level of the prior scientific qualification with regard to the chances of submitting a successful main application?
- Support of the applicant's research profile by the main application (career development): To what extent does the planned main application help the applicant to further develop their own profile for a successful academic career (starting from the current position, in terms of duration or financial scope of the funding, strengthening of scientific independence, scientific profile building and networking).

Main application:

- Scientific quality and innovativeness of the main application: To what extent is the main application innovative (are concepts and approaches novel, is the research project original, is there a new, innovative development)?
- Feasibility of the main application: Is the research project of the main application, as far as described, feasible in the time available (scientifically, financially, time-wise, location-wise)

UniBE Initiator Grant:

- Necessity of the UniBE Initiator Grant: To what extent is the Initiator Grant necessary for the preparation of the main application (e.g., scientifically, regarding the work situation)?
- Feasibility of the UniBE Initiator Grant proposal: Is the preparation of the main application (i.e., the implementation of the Initiator Grant) feasible (scientifically, financially, time-wise, location-wise)?