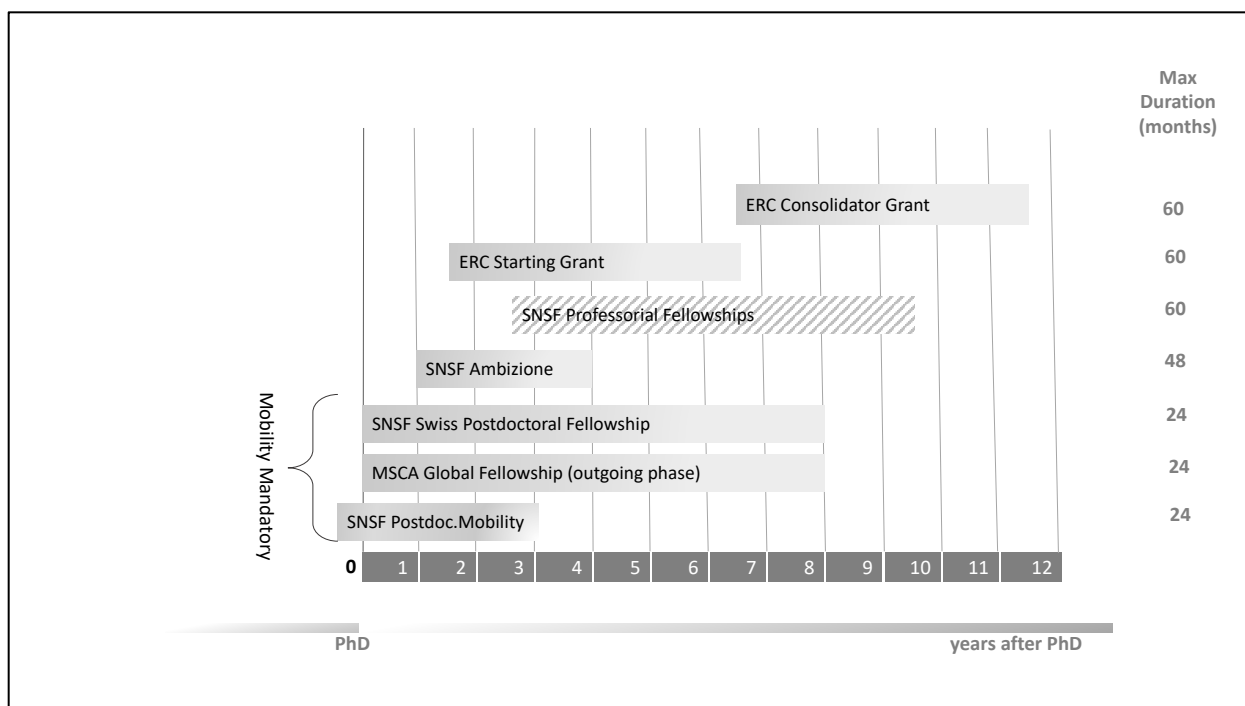


PhD achieved – what’s next?

You recently successfully completed your PhD at the University of Bern – Congratulations!

The following overview features the largest national and European funding opportunities for the next steps of your academic career. It is meant as an instrument to obtain a first overview of funding options. For details on the schemes, please consult the funders’ websites and/or approach the [Grants Office of the University of Bern](#). For a discussion of your individual situation and suitability of different career options, you may seek advice with [Dr. Matthias Hirt](#) or [Dr. Judith Zbinden](#).

Overview of schemes



Eligibility regarding research age

Eligibility windows are strictly enforced with the date of the defence being considered the date of PhD. Special conditions apply to researchers with an MD degree. Both the SNSF and the EU (Horizon Europe) allow extensions under defined circumstances, such as maternity (extension of 18 months regardless of the actual duration of the maternity leave), paternal leave and/or long-term illness. Check with the Grants Office for details.

Mandatory mobility for selected schemes

Mobility is considered an important asset for a research career. Additionally, strict rules on international mobility apply with Postdoc.Mobility, the MSCA fellowships and the Swiss Postdoctoral Fellowship. Check with the Grants Office for details.

Eligibility to European schemes

Switzerland is to date not associated to the European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon Europe). Negotiations have started in March 2024 and have well progressed. Therefore, a so-called “transitional arrangement” for ERC calls which open summer and autumn is now in place (see [press release by the Federal Council of 4 July 2024](#)): Researchers with Swiss host institutions are eligible to apply

to the ERC Starting Grant and ERC Consolidator Grant 2025. The current agreement does not cover MSCA actions, but the Federal Council's goal is to reach an agreement covering all Horizon Europe 2025 calls.

For further explanation see www.horizon-europe.ch, and/or consult with the [Grants Office](#).

Funding schemes currently with a host institution within or outside Switzerland

European Research Council (ERC) Starting and Consolidator Grants



The ERC supports outstanding researchers with funding for ground-breaking research projects in all disciplines. A typical ERC project has a profile that while risky promises a significant scientific gain if successful. With an ERC grant, you can finance yourself and establish or consolidate your own research group.

Mobility is not an asset per se, and nationality is not relevant. Host institutions must be located in an EU member state or country associated to Horizon Europe and formally state their support towards applicants. ERC grants are portable within the EU member states and associated countries.

ERC projects have a maximum duration of five years and a maximum budget of €1.5 mio for Starting and €2 mio for Consolidator Grants with the option to request additional funding of up to €1 mio for certain major cost items.

Deadlines yearly; Starting Grant: usually autumn; Consolidator Grant: usually winter. Information on upcoming deadlines: <https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-07/Call-calendar-2025.png>

Funding schemes currently requiring a host institution outside Switzerland

Postdoc.mobility



Postdoc.mobility fellowships by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) are open to researchers of Swiss nationality and those which have been active at a research institution in Switzerland for at least two years to conduct a (first) postdoc abroad. You can apply up to 9 months before completion of your PhD and have the possibility to apply for a return phase to an institution in Switzerland.

Deadlines twice a year; usually 1 February and 2 August

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) postdoctoral fellowships



MSCA postdoctoral fellowships offer training and career development to researchers of any nationality by funding a postdoc stay in a country where the researcher has not lived/worked for more than a year before the deadline (mobility requirement).

With European postdoctoral fellowships, the host institution needs to be located in an EU member state or country associated to Horizon Europe. Global postdoctoral fellowships consist of an outgoing phase in a country outside the EU member states and associated countries (currently including Switzerland) followed by a mandatory return phase in Europe (i.e. in an EU member state or country associated to Horizon Europe).

Deadline yearly; usually September

Funding schemes requiring a host institution in Switzerland

Ambizione



Ambizione supports promising researchers with at least one year of research experience after their PhD and at least one recognised research output from this first postdoc phase to become scientifically independent. A description of past and future mobility (considering all its facets) and a clear vision for a career in academia form part of the application. You can request your own salary (but you don't need to if your salary is already secured) and project costs including salary for a PhD student.

Deadline yearly; usually early November

Swiss Postdoctoral Fellowships



Swiss postdoctoral fellowships allow researchers who have not lived/worked in Switzerland for more than a year to conduct a project with a clear training component at a Swiss institution. The scheme thus partially makes up for researchers who want to move (or have recently moved) to Switzerland not being eligible to apply for a MSCA postdoctoral fellowship.

Transitional schemes; yearly deadline, check with Grants Office for information on open and upcoming calls

SNSF Professorial Fellowships



The SNSF is expected to introduce a career funding scheme for researchers around 3-10 years after PhD (exact research age range to be defined) once researchers with Swiss host institutions have access to the ERC Starting Grant. The exact nature of the scheme, including its name and when the first call will be launched remains to be seen.

Internal funding schemes at the University of Bern

The University of Bern offers a [range of funding instruments](#) for researchers employed here that foster collaboration, mobility and support in preparing funding applications. Further information about the promotion of early career researchers can be found on [our website](#).

Initiator Grant

The Initiator Grant is open to postdoctoral researchers who plan to apply for competitive funding with one of the main public funding agencies. Apply for up to 30 000 CHF for measures in preparation of the main funding application.

Deadline yearly; usually in February

UniBE Short Travel Grants for (Post)Docs

Enhance your mobility by undertaking a research stay of 2-8 weeks abroad and apply for up to 7 000 CHF for stays within Europe and up to 8 000 CHF for stays outside Europe.

Deadline twice a year; usually 1 March and 1 September

Promotion Fund

Apply for up to 5 000 CHF for activities that enhance your scientific network, e.g. organisation of a conference or workshop.

Deadlines twice a yearly; usually in spring and autumn

120% Care Grant

This grant for postdoc researchers with care responsibilities allows to temporarily reduce the workload through employment of a person supporting at work.

Deadlines four times a year

Databases for funding searches

The University of Bern is subscribed to two databases of funding opportunities: [Research Professional](#) helps you in finding national and international funding opportunities, while [Fundraiso](#) focuses on funding opportunities beyond public funders in Switzerland. [Clinical Research Careers](#) offers guidance on funding and career support for persons engaged in clinical research.

Job Portals

The following job portals help you finding employment as a researcher in Switzerland and beyond:

<https://eth-gethired.ch/en>

<https://www.myscience.ch/jobs>

<https://www.academics.de>

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs>

For questions concerning an academic career:

Dr. Matthias Hirt +41 (0)31 684 40 29 matthias.hirt@unibe.ch

Dr. Judith Zbinden +41 (0)31 684 48 05 judith.zbinden@unibe.ch

For questions concerning a planned project for a specific funding instrument:

Grants Office grantsoffice@unibe.ch