

Robert Gnehm Grant for Doctoral Students who are Parents

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Objectives

The Robert Gnehm Grant for parent doctoral students (hereafter the RGG-PhD) aims to support doctoral students in the early stages of parenthood, allowing them to benefit from the needed flexibility to devote more time to their child, while alleviating a temporary decrease in scientific productivity. One aim is to free them from work that can be delegated to others, under the responsibility of the head of lab; for example in the field of laboratory work or teaching. Other types of financial support, such as prolongation of the working contract of the PhD students or reduction of work rate, are conceivable (except for the compensation of the 4 months maternity leave, to be paid by the unit or school dotation or SNSF funding).

Eligibility

Are eligible:

- Doctoral students employed at EPFL expecting a child or who have a child¹.
- The applicant is the main care person for the children, or provides half of the childcare.
- Doctoral students employed at EPFL adopting a child are also eligible.

Scope of allocated grant

The RGG amounts to max. 20'000 CHF. The RGG-PhD is composed as follows: max. 15'000 from the Robert Gnehm and Equal Opportunity Office's fund, and min. 5'000 CHF matching funds by the employing unit (generally a laboratory or a research group).

For laboratories with small budgets, typically those of a tenure-track assistant professor, the matching fund of the Laboratory can be financed by the EPFL Equal Opportunity Office on request.

The RGG-PhD grant can be used during the period indicated in the application. Any change in the planned use of the RGG-PhD grant has to be communicated to EGA.

This financial support will be provided within the limits of available budgets.

Variants

Applicants can choose between two variants:

- A) Without reduction of contract-based work rate. The flexibility arrangement resulting in increased availability of the applicant for child care should be described in the application form.
- B) A (temporary) reduction of the applicant's work rate, as discussed with the PhD program director to ensure that the conditions are adequate to finish the PhD. In this case, the money freed as result of the lower work rate should be used by the Laboratory in a way to support the objective of the RGG request.

¹ For a non-birthing doctoral student employed at EPFL, a 80 % minimum work or study rate for both parents at the time of the application is requested.

Application

Applications should be submitted as early as possible, but at the latest three months before the expected implementation. Applications must be submitted to the EPFL Equal Opportunity Office (bureau.egalite@epfl.ch).

Application forms can be downloaded from the equality website [link to webpage].

Applicants are free to contact the EPFL Equal Opportunity Office in case they wish support for the request to their PI or for completing the application form.

Evaluation and Selection

The RGG-PhD is granted by the EPFL Research Awards Commission upon recommendation by the EPFL representative in the Board of Trustees of the Robert Gnehm Fund and the EPFL Delegate for equal opportunity.

The evaluation is based primarily on how well the request meets the goals stated above, on the specific justification provided for the use of the requested funds, and on the recommendation and contribution of the doctoral student's supervisor(s)/head of laboratory. Particular attention will be paid to the additional flexibility for the parent to organize their working time and spend more time with the child. Applicant and supervisor/head of laboratory will be invited for a short meeting prior to the decision.

At equal priority level in other respects, priority will be given to female doctoral students and doctoral students of tenure-track assistant professors.

Project management

After the evaluation by the representative in the Board of Trustees of the Robert Gnehm Fund and the EPFL Delegate for equal opportunity, the applicant registers the application on GrantsDB (<https://grantsdb.epfl.ch/pap/index.php>). Once the RGG is granted by the EPFL Research Commission, the decision is registered on GrantsDB.

Follow-up and Reporting

RGG-PhD beneficiaries are invited on a regular basis for a discussion with the Equal Opportunity Office. These discussions aim to ensure the smooth running of the RGG support.

The recipient has to announce to the Equal Opportunity Office if she or he leaves EPFL before the end of the grant. An arrangement will be found with the recipient and the lab on a case-by-case basis.

Recipients of an RGG must submit a short (maximum 2 pages) report at the latest three months after the end of the grant. This report contains: information on the use of the fund, the benefits to the applicant in terms of work-life balance and child care.

In case of reduction of work rate, use of and benefit ensured through additional support from the laboratory through allocation of freed resources should be described as well.

Suggestions for improvements to the program are also encouraged.