

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) EPFL Doc.Mobility

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Before the application

Who can apply?

The program is intended for doctoral students enrolled at EPFL in all disciplines, who wish to advance their PhD work, improve their scientific and professional profile, through a stay in a research entity abroad, and who meet the following conditions:

- be enrolled for at least 12 months as a doctoral student, and be employed at EPFL on the date of the deadline for submission of the application, and be not in the last 6 months of their PhD studies
- have passed the candidacy exam at the time of the start of the mobility stay
- not be funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)
- have Swiss nationality, a valid residence permit or a valid cross-border commuter permit, are married to or living in a registered partnership with a Swiss citizen
- have confirmed in writing their intention to continue their doctorate at EPFL after the mobility stay and to obtain the doctorate at EPFL

What documents do I need to complete the submission form?

The submission form (Google form) is available [here](#).

The required documents are:

- a project proposal using the [template](#) provided
- CV (max. 2 pages)
- transcript of Doctoral School credits
- last salary slip
- copy of any financial contribution received from other organizations of institutions related to your thesis
- letters of support (using [template](#) provided):
 - o by thesis Director
 - o by academic host abroad

- by academic institution abroad
- the partnership and/or family certificate, if applicable

What are the submission deadlines?

There are 2 deadlines per year, published on the [website of the Doctoral School](#).

Who can be a host?

The host institution must be a non-profit organization. Typically, these are tertiary education facilities, or a government or private research institute abroad.

The place of research must be different from the place of study prior to the doctorate (Bachelor, Master). The host institution must not be in the doctoral student's country of origin or previous residence (exceptions may be granted upon justified request, generally for scientific reasons). The research visit must not be part of a joint thesis or doctoral partnership or joint doctoral program.

Can I stay at more than one host research institution abroad?

No, the research stay should officially be hosted by one research institution which does not preclude collaboration with other local institutions.

Can I apply if I do not receive a doctoral salary from EPFL?

No, applicants must be enrolled and receive a doctoral salary from EPFL to be eligible.

What expenses are covered?

The doctoral students' existing employment contract at EPFL remains in force, and they continue to receive a salary during their stay abroad. The Doc.Mobility grant will cover a part of the salary during the research stay as well as the additional expenses listed below:

Cost category	Guide value (in CHF and per year)
Contribution to personal living expenses: The doctoral student's salary will continue to be paid at its current level.	EPFL Salary
Travel expenses ¹ :	1 round trip ticket, economy class

¹ In the exceptional justified case that the project abroad has been split, two return tickets will be covered.

EPFL pays you and your accompanying family members a contribution for only one round trip in economy class between your usual place of residence (e.g. Switzerland) and your research stay location.	
Costs of participation in scientific conferences ² : for participation in scientific congresses/conferences/workshops that are important for your research and that cannot be funded by the research project	2'000 (max)
Research costs ² : you may apply for a contribution to cover the costs essential for the realization of your research project, provided that you can prove that the host institution does not provide such benefits. (E.g.: consumables, lab animals, machine time, field expenses, analyses, minor equipment incl. software, reimbursement for study participants, Open Access publication costs, etc.)	3'000 (max)
Tuition fees ² : you may apply for a subsidy of up to 75% of the tuition fees to be paid to the host institution, provided that you can prove that the host institution has not waived the fees. A corresponding proof ("Confirmation of tuition fees") must be submitted in writing with the other application documents.	75%, up to 15'000 (max)
Child allowance: EPFL pays beneficiaries with children one allowance per year and per child. Allowances for children granted by third parties are deducted from this allowance.	12'000 per child per year
Family allowance Expenses for family members (spouse, partner) may also be considered, provided that these persons accompany you during the entire stay.	4'000 (max)

You must indicate in your application any financial contribution you receive from other organizations or institutions in the context of your thesis or mobility stay.

What expenses are not covered?

Expenses that are not listed above cannot be claimed. Grantees are strongly advised to check their insurance status, in particular for health and accident.

² Please note, that all spending must be verifiable, therefore all relevant receipts must be kept and enclosed with the final report.

What about my residence permit?

PhD students from abroad must contact the competent cantonal authority for foreigners to ensure that their residence permit can be maintained during their stay outside Switzerland and must inform the same authority of their temporary departure from Switzerland.

Submitting your application

How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted to the Doctoral School in electronic form via the dedicated submission form ([Google Form](#)) by the [submission deadline](#). They must comply with the [regulations](#) and contain all required indications and documents. Applications should be submitted in English.

Applications that are not complete, do not meet the eligibility requirements, or are received after the deadline will not be considered.

Can I still make changes or updates (e.g. if a paper has been accepted) after I have submitted the application?

No, modifications cannot be made once the application has been submitted.

Can I apply more than once?

You can only receive such a grant once during your studies.

If unsuccessful, you may apply a second time at most for an EPFL Doc.Mobility grant.

Evaluation of your application

Will there be evaluation interviews of the applicants?

No, interviews of the applicants are not part of the evaluation process.

What criteria are used to assess the selection process?

Applications for the EPFL Doc.Mobility grant will be formally checked by the Doctoral School. If applications meet the formal requirements, they will be examined scientifically by an ad-hoc selection committee on 3 aspects that together define the added value of the mobility stay for research: the quality of the scientific project, the motivation of the applicant and the quality of the host institution.

More details on the evaluation criteria are available in the [Regulations for EPFL Doc.Mobility programme](#), section 3.5.

When will I receive the decision?

Decisions will be communicated within 3 months of the deadline, in writing, by the Doctoral School.

After the decision

When is the starting date of the EPFL Doc.Mobility grant?

The EPFL Doc.Mobility grant always starts on the first day of a month.

The research stay may start no earlier than three months after the deadline for submission and no later than twelve months after the date of the award decision.

In the event of a medical reason or force majeure, the doctoral student may contact the Doctoral School in writing in order to request a change in the start date of the stay by attaching supporting documents.

How do I receive the grant?

The approved grant is released at the grantee's request using the form provided for this purpose. The funds are transferred in Swiss francs to a bank or postal account in Switzerland. The grantees are obliged to request the transfer of funds and start their project within a year of the date on which the ruling was issued.

Living costs (i.e. EPFL salary) will be paid in monthly instalments. All other expenses will be paid in one lump sum at the beginning of the mobility stay. All spending must be verifiable, therefore all relevant receipts must be kept and enclosed with the final report

Is it possible to start sooner/later than indicated in the application?

The research stay may begin no earlier than 3 months after the submission deadline and no later than 12 months after the date of the award decision.

In the event of a medical reason or force majeure, you may contact the Doctoral School by [email](#) to request a change in the start date of the stay by attaching supporting documents.

Can I extend my stay?

The maximum duration that can be requested is 12 months. Once the request has been approved no amendment is possible to the duration of the stay.

Can I waive the grant?

If you give up your mobility grant or terminate your research stay prematurely, you must inform the EPFL Doctoral School immediately in writing, stating the reasons.

You must reimburse pro rata temporis all grants that have been transferred in addition to the salary.

Can I make changes to the research plan or research location?

After the grant has been awarded, the research and activity plan, as well as the research schedule and location, can only be changed after written approval from the EPFL Doctoral School and the thesis Director, following a motivated written request from you.

Illness, accident, maternity or paternity

In the event of illness or accident during the mobility grant, the contribution and the duration of the grant may be increased appropriately upon request, provided that the scientific objectives pursued with the research stay could not otherwise be achieved. The grant may be extended by a maximum of 1 year.

Grantees who become mothers are entitled to 4 months of paid maternity leave during the period of the mobility grant.

Grantees who become fathers are entitled to 2 weeks of paid paternity leave during the period of the mobility grant.

Do I have to provide a final report?

During the mobility stay, you must maintain regular meetings with your thesis director as part of the supervision.

You must submit a report reflecting on the research stay abroad no later than 6 weeks after the end of the funding period. This report will be included in your annual report for the year in question. Guidelines for writing the report will be available on the [EPFL Doc.Mobility website](#).

What if my research stay cannot be carried out or must be postponed because of COVID-19?

It is the responsibility of the doctoral student to ensure that the host country is open to foreigners and to take into account all COVID-19 measures required by the country. Please refer to the FOPH list of high-risk countries and countries that the FDFA discourages people from visiting before making any travel plans, as restrictions are still in effect in many countries.

For more information on COVID-related issues, you can consult EPFL's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#).