ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Guidelines for the IDEA League Mobility Grants of the ETH Zurich Postdoctoral Fellowship programme

March 2024

Overview

The ETH Zurich Postdoctoral Fellowship programme supports incoming postdoctoral researchers at ETH Zurich. The programme is intended to foster young researchers who have already demonstrated scientific excellence in the early stages of their careers and supports them on their way towards academic independence. The duration of an ETH Fellowship is two years.

During or after their fellowship, ETH Fellows have the opportunity to conduct a research stay at one or more of the IDEA League[1] partner universities TU Delft, RWTH Aachen, Chalmers University and Politecnico di Milano. These research stays are between two weeks and three months long. The Mobility Grants are intended to expand the scientific portfolio and network of the ETH Fellow and should benefit the fellow's work at ETH Zurich or their career development. Thereby, the grants should enable and encourage the use of research infrastructure at other IDEA League universities and/or collaborations with researchers at these universities. A connection to research infrastructures is desirable, but not required. The research stay can also be used to start or work on joint projects. The Mobility Grant is competitive with only 5 grants available each year.

Funding

The Mobility Grants are awarded for a research stay of between two weeks and three months, which can be divided up.

A lump sum of CHF 5'000 will be awarded per month. A maximum of CHF 15'000 can be awarded per grant. For shorter stays, the funding will be adjusted to the duration of the research stay and the expected expenses.

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[1] The IDEA League is a strategic alliance between five leading European universities of science and technology. Through cross-border, bottom-up collaboration they share knowledge, experience and resources. The current members are: ETH Zurich, TU Delft, RWTH Aachen, Chalmers University and Politecnico di Milano.

The following costs may be covered through a Mobility Grant:

- Consumables and other research costs
- Access/user/service fees for research infrastructure, machine time, technology platforms
- Travel and accommodation

No salaries can be paid by the Mobility Grant. The allocated funding can only be used for expenses during the research stay.

Submission

Eligibility criteria

All active or former ETH Fellows are allowed to apply. Former ETH Fellows are allowed to apply as long as they are still employed at ETH Zurich.

The research stay can be performed during the active fellowship period or afterwards. The grantee must be employed at ETH Zurich during the entire duration of the Mobility Grant.

The research stay must be performed at one or more of the IDEA League partner universities of ETH Zurich:

- TU Delft, The Netherlands
- RWTH Aachen, Germany
- Chalmers University, Sweden
- Politecnico di Milano, Italy

The planned research stay must be between two weeks and three months. The grant can be split and more than one partner university can be visited for a maximum period of three months in total. The research stay can begin at the earliest after the receipt of the decision letter and is not awarded retrospectively.

The mobility grant can only be granted once to an (active or former) ETH Fellow.

One resubmission is possible in case of rejection.

Applications not complying with the eligibility criteria will be rejected on formal grounds.

Application

Applications must be written in English and sent directly by email as a single PDF file to the ETH Zurich Grants Office: ethfellows@sl.ethz.ch.

The application must include the following:

- A short abstract of the planned work – 150 words max.

- A description of the planned activities at the IDEA League host university, including the rationale for the visit, the added value for the ongoing work at ETH Zurich and/or the career development of the fellow – 2 pages max.

- An itemised, tabular budget with a justification for the requested funding.

- A short progress report of the ongoing ETH fellowship project or a description of the ongoing work post fellowship – ½ page max.

- Letter(s) of commitment of the host(s) at the prospective host institution(s) with a confirmation that they will provide support and access to the required infrastructure.

- A short letter of agreement by the ETH host professor confirming that they agree to the research stay and its scope.

A template for the application is provided and available on the website of the ETH Fellowship programme.

Deadlines

Requests can be submitted anytime. There are four cut off dates per year, after which applications will be evaluated: 1 March, 1 June, 1 September and 1 December.

Evaluation

The applications are reviewed by the ETH Zurich Grants Office. Members of the ETH Zurich Research Commission will be consulted if needed.

The evaluation criteria are:

- The rationale and scientific quality of the planned activities

- The significance and added value for the ongoing work and/or the career of the fellow

- The suitability of the host institute/group for the planned activities

- Progress of the ETH fellowship project so far

The decision (approval or rejection) will be communicated to the applicant one month after the next cut off date at the latest.

In line with DORA,[1] achievements will be assessed on the base of qualitative evaluations of a diverse range of research outputs and activities.

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[1] The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, https://sfdora.org/

Use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies:

The use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies such as large language models, chatbots, and image creators in the preparation of a Mobility Grant proposal is permitted in principle, but at the applicant's own risk. It must be disclosed in a cover letter by providing detailed information about which generative AI tools were used, for what purpose, and to what extent, whether in writing the proposal, creating illustrations, or collecting and analyzing data.

Please note that the use of generative AI tools may raise concerns regarding intellectual property and scientific misconduct. Applicants are fully responsible for the content and accuracy of their proposal. They must adhere to the principles of research integrity that apply at ETH Zurich. Since this extends to any and all parts of a proposal produced by an AI tool, applicants must ensure that all sources are cited appropriately and correctly, and that the documents do not contain factually incorrect, misleading, falsified, plagiarized, or fabricated information.

The Research Commission therefore advises applicants to exercise maximum caution when using generative AI or AI-assisted technologies in the development of their research proposals.

Gender aspects

ETH Zurich strives to promote gender equality in scientific research by integrating the gender dimension into the research content in all fields of research.

If the proposed research involves human subjects (e.g., as patients, consumers, users or as citizens in surveys), gender must be consistently taken into account from the proposal to the research and dissemination phase as well as in the experimental design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the outcomes. If gender aspects are not addressed a justification must be supplied.

Research not involving human subjects should adopt the principles of gender-sensitive research where appropriate (e.g., fundamental research on genomics, development of materials for use in the biomedical sector, product design).

Ethical issues

The research carried out in the framework of the project must comply with ETH Zurich's and the host university's scientific integrity and research data management regulations. The applicant must state if the intended research requires authorization or notification and seek all necessary authorisations. This applies in particular to research on humans, research on human embryonic stem cells, research on animals, research on GMO or pathogens and research in developing countries.

Post-grant processes

The research stay can be started as soon as the approval letter has been received and no longer than eight months after the submission date.

Whenever possible, Open Access should be granted to publications resulting from the Mobility Grant, as per ETH's Open Access Policy. Publication fees (APCs) are taken over by the ETH Library for the most important journals. Otherwise, the granted Mobility Grant funding or.the research cost budget of the ETH fellowship may be used to cover them.

The IP rights belong to ETH Zurich. ETH Zurich must be indicated as institutional affiliation for all publications resulting from research conducted within the framework of the fellowship project and research stay. The Mobility Grant programme must be mentioned in publications, e.g., in the form "This work was supported by an IDEA League Mobility Grant of the ETH Zurich Postdoctoral Fellowship programme".

To monitor and improve the programme, ETH Fellows are requested to send a short written report on the research stay to the ETH Zurich Grants Office within six weeks after the stay is finished (about one page). It should include the achievements during the research stay, a list of research outputs, as well as a statement on the benefits of the Mobility Grant to the Fellows' ongoing work or professional development.

Christian Wolfrum
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Uwe Sauer
President ETH Zurich Research Commission