Application guidelines for the Forschungskredit 2019: Postdoc

Valid only for the application period 2019 (submission deadline 1 February 2019). Significant modifications in comparison to the previous application period are marked with a ▲.

The team at the UZH Grants Office will be glad to help you if you have questions about applying for funding: support@research.uzh.ch, phone 044 634 53 89, www.researchers.uzh.ch

1. General terms

Funding from the Forschungskredit allows the University of Zurich to support junior scholars who would like to carry out a research project at UZH. Primarily salary funds are granted in order to provide researchers with protected research time for their project. There are two types of funding: Candoc for PhD candidates and Postdoc for postdoctoral researchers and scholars working on their habilitation.

1.1 Individual requirements

Eligible for funding are Postdocs and habilitation candidates (until attainment of habilitation) who are at the time of submission

• employed by the University of Zurich, or
• affiliated with the University of Zurich due to planned research activities.

Not eligible for funding are assistant professors, externally funded assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors.

Important: Please take note of the additional information and regulations of the faculties in the annex to the guidelines.

1.2 Outset and duration of funding

The duration of project funding is 24 months at the most. The project must begin on the first day of a given month. Projects can begin on 1 August 2019 at the earliest and on 1 August 2020 at the latest.

1.3 Expenses covered

Postdoctoral researchers and habilitation candidates can request funding for the following:

• their own salary
• the salary of a PhD candidate (or another co-worker)
• funds for material and travel that are essential for the project but cannot be obtained any other way (see 4.2.4)

Applicants may request a sum of CHF 220,000 at the most. Usually, the amount granted is between CHF 50,000 and 100,000.
2. Application procedure

2.1 Submission deadline
The submission deadline for applications is 1 February 2019 at 17:00:00 (CET).

2.2 Evaluation and decision
Documents must be filled in completely and submitted on time.
After the formal examination has been carried out by the UZH Grants Office, the applications will be evaluated by the respective Faculty’s representatives in the UZH Research Committee. Members of the UZH Committee for Academic Career Development as well as members of the Faculty’s Research Committees or of the Faculty’s Committees for Academic Career Development may be brought in to support the representatives in the application review process.
The following four aspects are considered:
• The applicant’s qualifications
• The applicant’s potential to pursue an academic career
• The scientific value of the project
• The project’s original and innovative qualities
The final decision is made by the UZH Research Committee based on the evaluation of the applications and with special regard to the available means. The budget available to each faculty is determined beforehand based on an allocation formula.

2.3 Notification
After the committee meeting, a provisional list of approved projects will be published on the Forschungskredit’s website (approximately mid of June 2019). The binding decision will be communicated to the applicants by the end of June 2019 at the latest.

3. Information on applying

3.1 Language of application
The application can be written in German or English (for exceptions, see the additional information and regulations of the faculties in the annex).

3.2 Electronic application
Applications are submitted electronically and can be sent in online starting 1 December 2018. The link to the online system will be published on our website: http://www.researchers.uzh.ch/en/funding/postdoc/fkpostdoc.html
There are three steps to submitting an application:
3.2.1 Registration and naming reference person(s)

Registration is necessary for each application submitted (including applications for extensions or revised applications). The following information is required: faculty, your personal details and your reference persons' contact information. Choose the faculty\(^1\) which the institute, department or clinic belongs to where you will carry out your project.

You must name a reference person. You may, but do not have to, name a second reference person. The letter of reference should voice an opinion on your recent research work and, if possible, discuss your ability to carry out the proposed project.

After registration, the UZH Grants Office will send an e-mail to all reference persons asking them to submit a letter of reference using the online system. **The deadline is 1 February 2019 at 17:00:00 (CET) as well. Please inform the reference persons in advance and, if necessary, remind them early enough. You can check the status of the reference letters in the online system.**

3.2.2 Editing application

After registration, applicants receive a personal link by e-mail that allows them to edit the application and upload additional documents. Editing of the application and checking of the status of reference letters is possible until the application is submitted definitively. For changes with regard to the reference persons, please contact the UZH Grants Office by e-mail (please do not create another application for this purpose).

3.2.3 Definitive submission of application

The definitive submission of the complete application must be done explicitly by 1 February 2019 at 17:00:00 (CET) at the latest. When submitting your application, you have to confirm that you have taken note of these guidelines, that your application is complete and all information is accurate, and that you have written the application on your own and in compliance with the principles of scientific integrity. Applications that have not been submitted will not be considered. Please complete and finally submit your application as early as possible. An extension of the submission deadline due to server overload is not possible.

Once the application has been submitted definitively, it is no longer possible to edit the application or check the status of the reference letters. There is no need to send a hard copy of your application.

3.3 Confirmation of receipt

After your application undergoes a routine assessment, you will receive a confirmation of receipt by e-mail (4 weeks after the submission deadline at the latest).

3.4 Applying for an extension

Please refer to the additional information of the faculties (see annex). Applications for extensions can only be submitted for projects that have already been funded by the Forschungskredit. They are processed with all official calls for proposals and must be submitted with the same documents necessary for a first-time application. In your research proposal, you should summarize the results of your research to date and discuss planned research activities.

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\(^1\) Applicants from the following joint institutes, centers or associated institutes choose the faculty indicated in brackets: Centre for Ethics: Ethics Research Institute (Phil.), Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine (Med.), Institute for Social Ethics (Theol.) / Department of Biochemistry (Med.) / Department of Molecular Mechanisms of Disease (Vet.) / Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Prevention Institute (Med.) / Institute for Biomedical Engineering (Med.) / Institute of Experimental Immunology (Med.) / Institute of Medical Virology (Med.) / Institute of Molecular Cancer Research (Med.) / Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology (Med.) / Institute of Physiology (Med.) / Schweizer Institut für Sucht- und Gesundheitsforschung (Phil.)
4. Application documents

The application is composed of the electronic application form (see 4.1) and the documents you upload (see 4.2).

4.1 Filling out the online form

1. Personal details
   - Home address: This is your home address at the time you submit your application. Please enter any change of address planned in the coming months including the date of the change.
   - Work address (UZH): Please enter the address of the institution at UZH in which you will work on your research project (incl. your personal contact details at the UZH; not those of your supervisor or other institute staff).
   - Correspondence address: This is the address where you would like to receive your mail.

2. Education and professional situation
   - PhD conferral: Please enter when you earned your PhD (date of examination).
   - Employment: If you are employed as a postdoctoral researcher or a teaching and research associate (e.g. UZH or SNSF), please state when the employment began and what your salary category is.

3. Project information
   - Name of project: The name of your project should characterize your proposed area of research clearly and succinctly.
   - Begin of funding: Please state when you would like to receive funding (first day of month, earliest: 1 August 2019, latest: 1 August 2020).
   - Duration of funding: 24 months at the most
   - Supervisor: Name of the person supervising your postdoc project at UZH.
   - Summary of research project: The summary should describe the project and identify the broad problem area concerned (at most 2,500 characters including empty spaces).
   - Consent by ethics committee/veterinary office: Status of the application if a consent of the ethics committee and/or the veterinary office is required according to law (see 4.2.5).

4. Finances
   - A) Salaries
     - You can apply for your own salary or that of a co-worker (e.g. a PhD candidate).
     - **Salaries for PhD candidates** are regulated according to the Swiss National Science Foundation (as of 2019) and based on the fixed employment level of 60%:
       - PhD 1st year: CHF 47,040
       - PhD 2nd year: CHF 48,540
       - PhD 3rd/4th year: CHF 50,040
     - Salaries for postdoctoral researchers correspond to the UZH-salary regulations and will be set in LK 18/03 (annual gross salary: CHF 94,469). There will be no salary adjustment for the second year. If you request a **level of employment of 30% or less**, please explain in the research proposal whether the project is feasible during this period of time and affiliated to the UZH.
     - **Salaries for co-workers** are regulated according to the general policy at UZH. For more information contact the responsible person for your faculty at the human resource department (http://www.pa.uzh.ch/aboutus/people.html, in German).
   - B) Funds for material and travel
     - Benefits paid by the employer will be added automatically to the gross salary (+15%).
     - All request funds for material and travel must be listed in a **separate** document according to the guidelines (see 4.2.4). Please enter the total amount from the individual categories in the electronic form.
   - C) Other applications for funding
     - This indicates whether you have applied for funding elsewhere, e.g. with SNSF. If you have already been awarded funding, please enclose a copy of the confirmation.

5. Comments
   - Experts can read your comments.

Click on "save and upload documents" in order to go to the page where all documents can be uploaded. Editing of the form is possible as long as the application is not submitted definitively.
4.2 Documents

You can upload the following documents as a PDF file:

- Research proposal (see 4.2.1)
- Resume/CV
- List of published work
- Copies of diplomas (see 4.2.2)
- Confirmation letter by institute or clinic (see 4.2.3)

If required:
- Budget of requested funds for material and travel (see 4.2.4)
- Consent(s) by ethics committee and/or veterinary office (see 4.2.5)

Previously uploaded documents can be overwritten by newer versions.

Please consider the following when you upload documents:

Only PDF files will be accepted (please no .doc, .jpg, .tiff, etc.)
There is a limit of 1 MB per document.
Do not upload password-protected documents, as they cannot be displayed correctly.

4.2.1 Research proposal

The research proposal is the main part of your application and provides a detailed description of your project. The proposal should identify clearly what your work entails and what methods you will employ.

The entire research proposal should be 10 pages at the most (illustrations, spreadsheets and formulae included, but excluding the bibliography) and must contain a font size of at least 11 points and a single line spacing as a minimum.

Please discuss the following points:

1. Objectives of your project
2. Background information on your project and the current state of research in the area. Please refer to key publications.
3. Planned research activities (experimental approach, methods, data collection, general schedule, possible assistants or cooperation with other institutions);
4. Available resources (infrastructure, personnel, financing) (see 4.2.3)
5. Significance of the expected results of your project (acquisition of knowledge, possible applications)

4.2.2 Copies of diplomas

Please submit copies of your doctoral certificate, your Master’s certificate, and your Bachelor’s certificate, incl. transcript of records or final grades (if issued). If you do not have the doctoral certificate at the time of submission, please submit the latest transcript of records, a document showing that you are eligible to the take the doctoral exam, or a corresponding confirmation from your supervisor.

4.2.3 Confirmation letter by institute or clinic

Please submit a confirmation letter written by the head of the institute or clinic where you will carry out your project. The letter should confirm that the infrastructure needed to carry out your project (e.g. machines, rooms, etc.) is available to you.
4.2.4 Budget of requested funds for material and travel

If you request funds for material and travel, please compile a separate list according to the following points and enter the total amount from the individual categories in the electronic form.

1. Material of permanent value: Costs for machines and instruments as well as parts to build or upgrade machines and systems.
2. Expendable items, upkeep and renting apparatuses and machines
3. Expenses for fieldwork and travel
4. Varia: costs for services, documentation materials, compensating test persons, etc.

Please note that funding for costs for computers, laptops, books, memberships, subscriptions to scientific journals, publishing costs as well as postage and telephone fees cannot be requested.

4.2.5 Consent(s) by ethics committee and/or veterinary office

If you are planning to perform research on humans or to carry out animal experimentation that requires the consent from the responsible ethics committee or the veterinary office according to law, you must submit a copy of this consent with enclosures (application form/form A and B). If the consent is still due, please submit a copy of your application forms and hand in the consent with enclosures (application form/form A and B) by the start date of your project at the latest.
Anhang / Annex

Zusätzliche Informationen und Bestimmungen der Fakultäten / Additional information and regulations of the faculties

zur Wegleitung zum Forschungskredit / to the Forschungskredit guidelines

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Die Theologische Fakultät und die Rechtswissenschaftliche Fakultät haben keine zusätzlichen Informationen und Bestimmungen erlassen. / The Faculties of Theology (ThF) and Law (RWF) did not define any additional information and guidelines.
A1. Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät / Faculty of Economics, Business Administration and Information Technology

About the „Forschungskredit“ (FK)

The FK is a competitive and popular funding instrument of the University of Zurich to support young scientists. It was created to lay ground for future careers in research and is therefore focused on excellence in research.

As the number of applications at the WWF has increased significantly in the past years, the volume of requested funds often exceeds the available financial resources. This is an indicator of an active and competitive research climate at our faculty and of established scientific quality.

The WWF considers the FK an award of excellence to support high quality proposals in the areas of Economics, Business Administration, Banking and Finance and Information Technology.

About the WWF policy

Applicants who are interested in applying for the FK should consider the following WWF policies in addition to the general FK guidelines.

1. Both WWF PhD students and postdoctoral researchers are eligible to apply for FK grants. Postdoctoral researchers are expected to have demonstrated their potential for an academic career at the time of application.

2. Permanent faculty members are not permitted to apply for FK grants.

3. Research proposals must be written independently by the candidate and should express the candidate’s own research ideas.

4. Candidates should demonstrate above average performance in their academic work.

5. Applications should meet the expected scientific quality criteria of the candidate’s field of study.

6. Applications should demonstrate the candidate’s strong connection to the University of Zurich.

7. The WWF considers FK grants to be starting funding for talented young scientists. Proposals from applicants who are already funded from other institutions or external funding sources, such as SNF, will not be considered.

8. Awarded grants typically support the salary of the recipient for approximately 1 year, subject to the overall resources available and competition for funding in a given year. Consumables and other research expenses are only funded in exceptionally well-justified situations.

9. A candidate may only be awarded an FK grant once. Follow-up applications are not considered.

10. Candidates are required to provide the name of their supervisor as well as a referrer from outside of UZH (mandatory). Candidates may also be asked to submit an additional UZH-external reference letter after the submission deadline.
A2. Medizinische Fakultät / Faculty of Medicine

Financial situation

The Forschungskredit is a successful and popular funding instrument for researchers from the Faculty of Medicine. It is highly competitive and with time has become a distinction of excellence for successful applications. The Forschungskommission of the Faculty of Medicine is strongly committed to achieve a fair selection of the applications, based on high scientific quality and relevance as well as added-value for the career of the successful applicants. Accordingly, abiding to the following rules and restrictions is key for being considered for funding:

PhD students (Candoc)

1. PhD students or prospective PhD students applying for the Forschungskredit should distinguish themselves in above-average performances during their studies and/or in their first scientific work.
2. They have to be accepted by a PhD program of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School or of the Medical Faculty of the University of Zurich at the time of application.
3. As a general rule, mobility between the Master thesis and the PhD thesis is rated positively.
4. The application should include own research ideas of the candidate and has to be written independently by the candidate.
5. Financial support of an application includes the salary of the applicant for at least 1 year. Additional funds for consumables are possible only to a limited extent.

Postdocs

1. Postdocs applying for the Forschungskredit should distinguish themselves in above-average performances in their scientific work, including publications and acquisition of competitive third party funding.
2. As a general rule, they should not have worked longer than 3-5 years at postdoctoral level at the time of submission of a Forschungskredit application.
3. Applications from postdocs working in the same group as for their promotion (MD or PhD) will not be considered, except when mobility is not possible due to family circumstances. The exception has to be motivated in a letter joined to the application.
4. The application should be based own research ideas of the candidate and has to be written independently by the candidate.
5. Financial support of an application includes mainly the salary of the applicant for at least 1 year. Additional funds for consumables are possible only to a limited extent.
6. Postdocs requesting the salary of a PhD student have to include a letter from the direction of their clinic or institute confirming their status as independent group leader, including publication of the research supported by the Forschungskredit as last author, and coverage of the salary for the remaining duration of the PhD thesis.
7. Funds for appointment of technical staff for the realization of a project are not considered.
A3. Vetsuisse-Fakultät / Vetsuisse-Faculty

Since the Forschungskredit aims to encourage young scientists to prepare for a future career as independent researchers, the research proposal has to be written independently by the applicant. Importantly, the application has to be submitted in English.

Applicants from the Vetsuisse-Faculty, University of Zurich (VSF-UZH) should consider the following policy of the VSF-UZH in addition to the "Forschungskredit Guidelines":

The “Forschungskommission” of the VSF-UZH aims to support high quality research proposals in the area of veterinary sciences.

Grant proposals principally cover salaries and, if funding allows, may also cover consumables to some extent. Applicants should note that the awards usually do not exceed CHF 50’000 – 100’000.

Two categories of applicants are possible:

• Talented PhD students with good qualifications, presenting an original project. Veterinary students enrolled in a PhD program will benefit from a slight preference. Candidates doing their PhD in the PhD program of the Graduate School Bern (GCB) have to be registered with the University of Zurich to be eligible for the Forschungskredit (please see: http://www.vet.uzh.ch/de/studium/doktorat/phd.html). Candidates on the level of the classical veterinary thesis (Dr. med. vet.) are typically not considered.

• Postdoctoral fellows, Assistants or Oberassistants (who are not yet principal applicants of a SNSF grant) with good publication records and good potential for an academic career presenting an original project. These applicants can apply for their own salary or for the salary of a doctoral student. Veterinarians with a PhD have a slight preference. Applications from tenured faculty members and from permanent staff are not considered.

New applications from previous awardees (including direct follow-up applications to ongoing projects) will only be considered under special circumstances. The applicant must provide a detailed and convincing statement why he/she should again be considered for the award, including a description of the results of the previously supported research project. Failure to mention a previous Forschungskredit award will lead to exclusion of the current application at any stage of the evaluation process.
A4. Philosophische Fakultät / Faculty of Arts (for English, see p. 12)

Generelle Bestimmungen


- Es muss eine enge Verbindung der Antragstellenden zur UZH nachgewiesen werden. Mindestens ein Referenzschreiben muss von einer Person aus dem Kreis der ordentlichen und außerordentlichen Professoren/Professorinnen, der Assistentenprofessoren/-professorinnen oder der SNF-/ERC-Förderungsprofessoren/-professorinnen der UZH verfasst werden und das Projekt muss schwerpunktmässig an der UZH durchgeführt werden.


- Unterstützungsansprüche für den Abschluss von Qualifikationsarbeiten und Projekten, die bereits anderweitig erheblich gefördert worden sind (z. B. SNF), werden nicht bewilligt.

- Falls Bewerberinnen und Bewerber schon in Forschungsprojekten gearbeitet haben bzw. Förderung erhielten, müssen die Dauer und die Art der bisherigen Förderung im Lebenslauf eindeutig ausgewiesen sein.


Candoc


- Verlängerungen werden nur in sehr gut begründeten Ausnahmefällen und höchstens für 6 Monate bewilligt.

Postdoc

- Es können Anstellungen von höchstens 80% beantragt werden.

- Es werden keine Verlängerungen bewilligt.

- Postdocs und Oberassistierende, die bereits eine Anstellung an der UZH haben, können eine Erhöhung ihres Forschungspensums um maximal 20% und für eine begrenzte Zeit (höchstens 1 Jahr) beantragen. Dies gilt nicht für Projekte, die anderweitig erheblich gefördert worden sind. Es muss ein Forschungsplan eingereicht werden, in dem der zu bearbeitende Projektteil dargestellt wird.
A4. Philosophische Fakultät / Faculty of Arts (for German, see p. 11)

General Provisions

• Grants from the Forschungskredit are awarded solely to cover the salary costs of applicants; applications for other types of personnel funding will not be approved. In exceptional cases, non-personnel funds may be approved to cover field expenses to a limited extent. No funding is approved for participation in conferences.

• Applicants must demonstrate a close connection to UZH. Applications must be supported by at least one letter of reference from a full professor, associate professor, assistant professor or SNSF /ERC assistant professor”; the applicant’s project must be carried out primarily at UZH.

• Advise the relevant chair, department, or institute about your application and ensure that any support offered by the chair, department, or institute is clearly mentioned in your letter of reference. This is important from both a content and practical perspective, especially if your research project requires the use of specific infrastructure such as labs or a working space at the chair, department, or institute. Because space at certain UZH facilities is very limited, such requirements must be agreed in advance with the relevant chair, head of department, or head of institute.

• Applications for funding to complete qualifying papers and projects that already receive substantial support from other bodies (e.g. SNSF) will not be approved.

• Applicants who have worked on supported research projects in the past must clearly detail the duration and type of support in their Curriculum Vitae.

• It is not advisable to simultaneously submit your project to both the Research Fund and the SNSF (Doc.Mobility or Early Postdoc.Mobility), as these two funds for academic career development pursue different aims.

Candoc

• PhD theses are generally viewed as the starting point of an academic career; these generally commence shortly after completion of a Master's degree and are supported by the Research Fund. If a longer period of time has elapsed between your most recent university degree and the commencement of your doctoral thesis, provide a brief explanation of how your time away from studies relates to your PhD plans. This is relevant partly because each application must be assessed in relation to the applicant’s age.

• Extensions are only approved in exceptional, highly justified cases and for no longer than six months.

Postdoc

• Applications may be submitted for an employment level of up to 80%.

• No extensions are approved.

• Postdoctoral researchers and senior teaching and research assistants who are already employed at the University of Zurich may apply to increase the employment level of their research position by a maximum of 20% for a limited period of time (maximum one year). This does not apply to projects that already receive substantial funding from other bodies. Applicants must submit a research proposal that details the project component to be completed.
A5. Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät / Faculty of Science

Candoc

1. The application must include own research ideas of the applicant and has to be written independently by herself/himself. Applicants must be accepted by one of the UZH PhD programs in order to apply.

2. Financial support of an application may include the salary of the applicant plus funds for consumables (on a limited scale). The allocation of funds will prioritize salaries over other requested funds.

3. PhD students will be supported from the FK for a maximum duration of 2 years. Proposals from applicants who have already obtained 2 years of funding will not be considered.

4. Teaching requirements according to the ordinance for obtaining a doctoral degree (‘Promotionsverordnung’) as well as regulations of the PhD candidate’s graduate school apply.

Postdoc

1. Postdocs applying for the Forschungskredit should distinguish themselves by above average performances in their scientific work. The application must include own research ideas of the applicant and has to be written independently by herself/himself.

2. Postdocs should not have worked longer than 5 years (full time equivalent) at the postdoctoral level at the time of submission of a Forschungskredit application. Applicants who obtained their PhD at UZH and wish to continue working as a postdoc in the same research group must explain why a change of institution or of research group within UZH is not possible.

3. Financial support of an application may include the salary of the applicant plus funds for consumables (on a limited scale). The allocation of funds will prioritize salaries over other requested funds.

4. Funds for appointment of technical staff for the realization of a project will not be considered.

5. Postdocs will be supported from the FK for a maximum duration of 2 years. Proposals from applicants who have already obtained 2 years of postdoc funding from the FK will not be considered.