DOC.MOBILITY
APPLICATION GUIDE

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Doc.Mobility is open to doctoral students who have been matriculated at the University of Fribourg for at least 12 months at the time of application, provided they are not funded by the SNSF.

Applications from PhD students employed as *graduate assistants** by Unifr are given priority.

The grant is awarded for an uninterrupted period of 6 to 12 months. The stay starts at the very earliest 3 months after the submission deadline (later if a visa is required!) and at the latest 9 months afterwards. Bear in mind that the decision of the Research Promotion Committee reaches the applicant approximately 10 weeks after the submission deadline. For organizational reasons, it is preferable to plan for departure/return at the beginning or end of the semester. The project/stay start date is always the first day of the month, and the end date is always the last day of the month.

The choice of host institution must be relevant to the planned research, and a stay there should add real value towards the project. The host cannot be located in the applicant's country of origin, must be different from the study and/or graduation place, and must not be the one attended within the framework of a doctoral partnership (SEMP, please check the IRO webpage Partner Universities) or a thesis co-supervision. Exceptions are possible on prior reasoned request (see Guidelines art. 3 para. 6). A maximum of two institutions may be selected, although selecting just one often allows a greater focus on the project itself. All the requested documents must be provided for each host institute.

Recipients may have to take numerous private steps (residence permits, visas, housing, insurance, social security contributions, tax, etc.). This should be kept in mind when planning the project.

Beneficiaries must remain matriculated as doctoral students at Unifr for the whole duration of their stay abroad; at the end of the stay, they must return to their position and complete their doctorate at Unifr.

Abroad, the scholarship holder must work at least 80% on the research project throughout the stay. This rate may be reduced on a reasoned request, for example, in case of family obligations.

* Graduate assistants must take *unpaid leave* for the entire period covered by the grant. They will receive no salary, social security, or other insurance cover, except family allowance, where applicable. With the help of their unit and HR, they will have to organise their *replacement* for the duration of their research stay. This also requires a significant amount of time, both when leaving and when returning to the work position.

ALLOWABLE AMOUNTS

The grant amount depends on the destination and the applicant's individual situation. Eligible fees and costs are available online. The award of the grant is not retroactive, and no additional support can be granted after the fellowship has been awarded. The grant may not be used for purposes other than those for which it was awarded.

Core support:

- fellowship (living & research costs abroad, scientific events fees included, if any);
- travel costs (round trip, flat-rate contribution).

Should the beneficiary be accompanied by their legal partner for an uninterrupted period of at least six months, a higher fellowship rate applies, provided the partner has no income.

Possible additional allowances:

- tuition fees, upon proof of denial of exemption by the host institute (max. 2'500/semester);
- essential research costs, upon proof that access to such resources is not provided by the host institution (max. 1'000/semester);
- child allowance (Unifr rates - after deduction of possible third-party contributions).
- travel costs for accompanying person(s), following Guidelines art. 12 para. 1 b).

SUBMISSION

Submit your application using the online submission form. Follow the instructions in this application guide and those provided directly in the form.

The submission deadlines are 1 March and 1 September.

The allowed languages are French, German, and English. In exact and natural sciences, medicine, psychology, economics and political science, and computer science, applications *must* be submitted in English.

Applications failing to meet the formal requirements will be declared ineligible.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Depending on your situation, the following documents may be required; **those marked in bold are mandatory in all cases.**

Only PDF format is accepted (max 2 MB/file unless other indication – use Adobe's File Optimisation tool if necessary).

Name each document so that it is easily identifiable, and ensure that the scanned pages are legible.

Documents to be attached to the online submission form by the applicant:

1. **Cover letter and statement of commitment**
2. **CV & Major scientific achievements**
3. **Publications list**
4. **Diplomas**
5. Unifr employment contract as a graduate assistant
6. **Certificate of matriculation as a doctoral student**
7. **Identity document** and residence permit
8. **Research plan**
9. Improvements report
10. Ethical and legal authorization(s) and notification
11. Applicant's self-declaration of ethical and legal compliance
12. Host institution's statement of ethical and legal compliance
13. **Host Institution's official hosting confirmation**
14. Credentials for tuition fees
15. Credentials for essential research costs
16. Credentials for the accompanying partner
17. Credentials for the child(ren)

Reference letters to be e-mailed by referees:

18. **Invitation letter from the host supervisor**
19. **Support letter from the thesis director**

1. Cover letter and statement of commitment

The application letter is to be addressed to the Research Promotion Committee Members. In addition to the usual content, it must include the applicant's commitment to

− remain matriculated at the University of Fribourg during the stay abroad;

− achieve the PhD in the institution - the planned date of the thesis defense is to be indicated.

2. CV & Major scientific achievements

The CV should be written in the same language as the research plan. All dates must be given in years and months. A maximum of 4 pages (min. font size 10) is allowed.

Structure of the curriculum vitae:

1. Information about the person, including ORCID

2. Education: in addition to the detailed information about your education, please indicate the beginning of your doctoral studies and the name of your supervisor. Applicants with a medical degree must also provide the state exam date.

3. Previous employment and current position with the name of the supervisor(s)

4. Institutional responsibilities (committees, etc.)

5. Teaching activities (summary) and supervision of students

6. Activity in panels, boards, organization of conferences, and individual scientific activities

7. Prizes, awards, scholarships

8. Active membership in scientific societies

9. Personal skills (e.g., languages, digital skills)

10. Career breaks

Major scientific achievements:

This section is attached to the CV and describes the applicant's scientific achievements which provide relevant information on the academic profile and scientific outputs, such as knowledge transfer activities, software, databases, prototypes, presentations at conferences, etc. The specific contribution of the applicant and the impact of such work must be described here. A maximum of 2 pages (min. font size 10) is allowed.

3. Publications list

Only material already published, currently being printed, or agreed for publication may be mentioned in points 1 to 4; unpublished work must be listed under point 10.

Structure of the publication list

1. Monographs

2. Publications in scientific journals (divided into peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed)

3. Conference contributions (divided into peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed)

4. Contributions to books

5. Patents and licenses

6. Contributions to international conferences (e.g., oral presentations, posters)

7. Public relations (e.g., public commitment to science, technology and knowledge transfer, scientific art, etc.)

8. General contributions to science (e.g., speaker of an international experiment, leader of an international expedition, founder of an international network or training program, etc.)

9. Other applicable results (e.g., maps, methods, prototypes, software, databases, design, arXiv articles, contributions to big data collaborations, etc.)

10. Unpublished work

You can choose to list only the most relevant publications and include an ORCID-link.

4. Diplomas

Join a copy of your bachelor's and master's diploma (including the grade sheet); Graduates in medicine are required to attach a copy of their state examination (or equivalent).

5. Unifr employment contract as a graduate assistant

A copy of the Unifr employment contract as a graduate assistant mentioning the start and end dates of the engagement, as well as the employment rate, must be provided by all graduate assistant candidates (areas that are not relevant for eligibility can be hidden).

6. Certificates of matriculation as a doctoral student

Attestation(s) of matriculation proving that the applicant has been registered as a doctoral student at Unifr for at least 12 continuous months (available on the MyUnifr portal), and current certificate of matriculation as a doctoral student valid at the date of submission. If the latter document is not available when applying, it must be provided at the latest when requesting the release of the grant.

7. Identity documents

- Swiss citizen: passport or identity card
- Foreign citizen: passport and residence permit

These documents must be valid on the date of application.

The legal provisions governing entry, stay, and departure in/from Switzerland and in/from the country(ies) of the destination apply. Renewals or requests for authorization should be addressed, in due time, to the relevant authorities (may require considerable time).

8. Research plan

The research plan is the decisive element for the evaluation of the project, especially for the assessment of its scientific quality, i.e., its relevance, topicality, originality, feasibility, and adequacy of the chosen methodology.

Together with the CV and the scientific performance record, the research plan also serves to assess the scientific qualification of the applicant, in particular, their expertise concerning the research project.

The research plan must be produced in its entirety *by the candidate* and must consist of *original, unpublished text written by him-/her*, except for fields 2.1. and 2.2. below. In the standard methods description, the integration of third-party material (illustrations, graphics, etc.) or already published *applicant's production* material is allowed to a certain extent. Citations must be marked as such (inverted commas and square brackets or appropriate wording), and a verifiable source must be given for each citation in the foot-/endnotes and the bibliography.

Structure of the research plan

A maximum of 10 pages or 40'000 characters (min. font size 10), including spaces, footnotes, illustrations, formulas, and tables, is allowed. The bibliography is not included in the page limit.

1. Introduction – summary of the research plan (max. 800 characters).

2. State of research in the field – project description in the context of the current state of knowledge/research in the field.

3. State of applicant's research – description of the applicant's own research work in the field of the project or related fields, results to date, and relevance of this preliminary work for the current project.

4. Detailed research plan – based on the information provided under points 2.1 and 2.2, indicate which research approaches are used and which concrete goals are intended to be achieved during the application period. The scope and level of detail of the information provided should enable the experts to assess the appropriateness of the methodological approach and the feasibility of your research project.

5. Schedule and milestones – schedule showing the most important milestones.

6. Host institution – rationale for the institution's choice.

7. Significance of the research work – description of the scientific importance and potential impact of the project on the field and science in general. Intended form of publication of the research results (e.g., articles in scientific journals, monographs, conference proceedings, etc.).

8. Bibliography

9. Improvements report, if applicable

If the project has been previously rejected and is being resubmitted, a detailed statement of the improvements introduced in the new version of the project must be attached. This document should comment on each of the observations made in the rejection decision and explain how these have been considered in the new version (or not, and why).

10. Ethical and legal authorization(s) and notification(s), if applicable

If the planned research is subject to legal or ethical authorization or notification (may concern SCI-MED, SES, and Psychology), provide a scan of the granted permission or the receipt of the notification. If the needed authorizations have yet to be received when applying, they must be provided at the latest when requesting the release of the grant. Without these documents, the grant will not be awarded.

Research requiring authorization or notification involves:

- Human beings, both HRA-relevant and HRA-irrelevant (Human Research Act)
- Human embryonic stem cells
- GMOs or pathogens
- animal experiments covered by the Animal Welfare Act (& 3Rs principles)
- genetic resources (Access and benefit-sharing (ABS) - Nagoya Protocol)

11. Applicant's self-declaration of ethical & legal compliance, if applicable

Where a project requires ethical and legal authorizations and/or notifications, the candidate must confirm in writing their commitment to respect the ethical and legal provisions of Switzerland and of the host country(ies). Without this self-declaration, the grant will not be awarded.

During the project, the beneficiary must at all times comply with the host country and institution's legal provisions and ethical guidelines.

12. Host institution's statement of ethical & legal compliance, if applicable

Where a project requires ethical and legal authorizations and/or notifications, the host institute's official confirmation that all legal and ethical institutional and national rules are strictly observed must be attached to the submission. Without this official confirmation, the grant will not be awarded.

Should the project involve two different institutions, an official statement of compliance must be provided for each institution.

13. Host institution's official hosting confirmation

An *official* hosting confirmation letter/certificate from the host institution's administration must be attached to the submission. This document must state the start and end dates of the research visit and the amount of the tuition fees (if claimed by the candidate). Additionally, the document must clearly state whether the grantee will have access to the necessary infrastructure for the entirety of the research project or not. In the latter case, the nature and amount of additional costs must be detailed (essential research costs).

Only duly justified costs can be requested by the applicant, if admitted (see "allowable amounts" above). Contribution to the general costs of the institution is not covered by Doc.Mobility.

Should the project involve two different host institutions, the requested documents must be provided for each institution.

14. Credentials for tuition fees, if applicable (see point 13. above)

Tuition fees (up to CHF 2500 per semester) are admitted only upon proof that the host institution has rejected the request for exemption.

15. Credentials for specific research costs, if applicable (see point 13. above)

Additional research fees (for example, consumables, devices, or software) up to CHF 1000 per semester are admitted only if the nature and amount of these costs are specified in the host institution's official hosting confirmation.

16. Credentials for accompanying partner, if applicable

Only legal partnership (marriage or registered partnership) is concerned, and the following two conditions must be met:

- the partner accompanies the beneficiary for at least 6 continuous months
- the partner is not economically active at the time of submission and for the duration of the stay

Attach a copy of the marriage or partnership certificate, the partner ID document, and a self-statement from each person (candidate and partner) explaining why the partner's travel is necessary. Additional supporting documentation may be required after submission.

17. Credentials for child(ren), if applicable

Attach a scan of the family certificate and the ID document of the accompanying child(ren).
The allowance amount is the one applied by Unifr.

18. Reference letter from the Unifr thesis director

As a general rule, the letter of support should indicate in what context and for how long the reference person has known the applicant, what they consider to be the applicant's main scientific competencies and achievements in their research field, and what is their potential for pursuing a scientific career.

This support letter must be sent no later than 3 working days before the submission deadline *by the reference person from their institutional mailbox* to spr-internal-funding@unifr.ch with the subject line "DM Reference Letter - Applicant *SURNAME Name".*

19. Reference letter(s) from the applicant's supervisor(s) abroad

A letter of invitation from the intended supervisor at the host institution must be sent no later than 3 working days before the submission deadline *by the reference person from his/her institutional mailbox* to spr-internal-funding@unifr.ch with the subject line "DM Reference Letter - Applicant *SURNAME Name".*

Should the project involve two different host institutions, a letter of reference must be provided by each supervisor.

EVALUATION & DECISION

The Research Promotion Committee of the University of Fribourg is responsible for the evaluation of the applications and for the grant decision.

The decision is communicated to the candidate only in writing, *at the earliest* 10 weeks after the submission deadline. The candidate's thesis director receives a copy of the decision.

Major evaluation criteria:

- ✓ quality, originality, and topicality of the research project
- ✓ host institution quality and suitability for the project
- ✓ probability of achieving the targeted objective
- ✓ applicant's scientific achievements at the time of submission
- ✓ applicant's aptitude to complete the thesis and obtain the PhD
- ✓ candidate's suitability to embark on a scientific career

Should the first submission be rejected, the applicant may resubmit a new version of the project. Should the project be refused a second time, it will be considered definitively rejected.

GRANT PAYOUT

There is no legal entitlement to a funding contribution. The amounts and terms stipulated in the grant decision are binding.

The beneficiary is responsible for claiming the release of the grant via the online form. The release can be requested at the earliest 30 working days before the beginning of the stay; the amount of the fellowship will be credited to the beneficiary's account within 30 working days.

Doc.Mobility is not retroactive, and no additional sum can be awarded after the grant has been obtained. The awarded amount must be refunded if not used for the stated purpose.

PROJECT COMPLETION AND REPORTING

The recipient is required to submit a final report at the latest 6 weeks after the end of the project using the online form available on the Doc.Mobility webpage. This report will be sent for feedback to the candidate's thesis director, the supervisor abroad and the Committee.

Contact:
Research Promotion Service (SPR)
spr-internal-funding@unifr.ch

Please note: the SPR's support can only be provided in relation to the application form; no advice can be offered regarding the project's content.