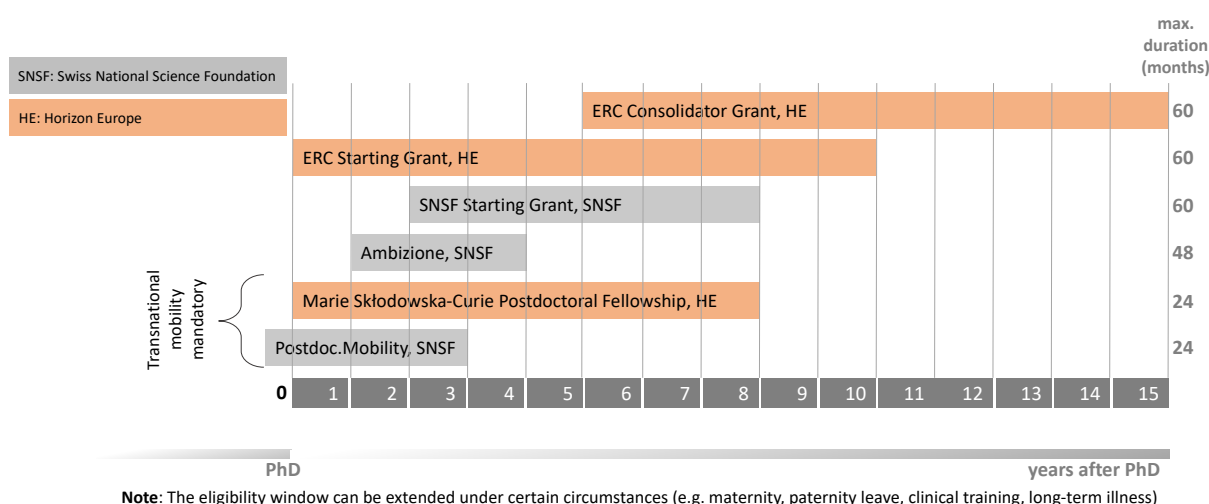


PhD achieved – what's next?

You recently successfully completed your PhD at the University of Bern – Congratulations!

The following overview features major national and European funding opportunities for the next steps of your academic career. It is meant as an instrument to obtain a first overview of funding options. For details on the schemes, please consult the funders' websites and/or approach the [Grants Office of the University of Bern](#). For a discussion of your individual situation and suitability of different career options, you may seek advice with [Dr. Matthias Hirt](#) or [Dr. Judith Zbinden](#).

Overview of schemes



Eligibility regarding research age

Eligibility windows are strictly enforced with the date of the defence being considered the date of PhD. Special conditions apply to researchers with an MD degree. Both the SNSF and the EU (Horizon Europe) allow extensions under defined circumstances, such as maternity (extension of 18 months regardless of the actual duration of maternity leave), paternal leave and/or long-term illness. Check with the Grants Office for details.

Mandatory mobility for selected schemes

Mobility is considered an asset for a research career. Additionally, strict rules on international mobility apply with Postdoc.Mobility and the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships. Check with the Grants Office for details.

Brief description of funding schemes

Postdoc.mobility



Postdoc.mobility fellowships by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) are open to researchers of Swiss nationality and those who have been active at a research institution in Switzerland for at least two years to conduct a (first) postdoc abroad (mobility is mandatory). You can apply up to 9 months before completion of your PhD and have the possibility to apply for a return phase to an institution in Switzerland.

Deadlines twice a year; usually 1 February and 2 August

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) postdoctoral fellowships



MSCA postdoctoral fellowships offer training and career development to researchers of any nationality by funding a postdoc stay in a country where the researcher has not lived/worked for more than a year before the deadline (mobility is mandatory).

With European postdoctoral fellowships, the host institution needs to be located in an EU member state or country associated to Horizon Europe. The Global postdoctoral fellowships consist of an outgoing phase in a country outside the EU member states and associated countries followed by a mandatory return phase in Europe (i.e. in an EU member state or country associated to Horizon Europe).

Deadline yearly; usually in September

Ambizione



Ambizione supports promising researchers with at least one year of research experience after their PhD and at least one recognised research output from this first postdoc phase to become scientifically independent. A description of past and future mobility (considering all its facets) forms part of the application. You can request your own salary (but you don't need to if your salary is already secured) and project costs.

Deadline yearly; usually early November

SNSF Starting Grant



The SNSF launched its own career funding scheme for researchers 2-8 years after PhD called "SNSF Starting Grant" for the first time in 2025. Applicants need to have a link to Switzerland (either being a Swiss national, having obtained an academic degree here or worked for at least two years at a Swiss research institution) to be eligible. Researchers who have both an academic position which allows them to lead research projects independently and have secured significant third-party funding are not eligible to apply. Neither the choice of the host institution nor past or planned mobility are amongst the evaluation criteria.

Deadline yearly; from 2026 on early May

European Research Council (ERC) Starting and Consolidator Grants



The ERC supports outstanding researchers with funding for ground-breaking research projects in all disciplines. With an ERC grant, you can finance yourself and establish or consolidate your own research group. Mobility is not an asset per se, and nationality is not relevant. Host institutions must be located in an EU member state or country associated to Horizon Europe and formally state their support of applicants.

ERC grants are portable within the EU member states and associated countries.

ERC projects have a maximum duration of five years and a maximum budget of €1.5 mio for Starting and €2 mio for Consolidator Grants with the option to request additional funding of up to €1 mio.

The [ERC announced](#) plans to change eligibility time windows from calls opening in 2026 onwards: Researchers are expected to be eligible for a Starting Grant immediately after PhD award and up to 10 years after PhD (up to now: 2-7 years after PhD award). Consolidator Grants are expected to be open for researchers 5-15 years after PhD award (up to now: 7-12 years after PhD award).

Deadlines yearly; Starting Grant: usually autumn; Consolidator Grant: usually winter



Internal funding schemes at the University of Bern

The University of Bern offers a [range of funding instruments](#) for researchers employed here that foster collaboration, mobility and support in preparing funding applications. Further information about the promotion of early career researchers can be found on [our website](#).

Initiator Grant

The Initiator Grant is open to postdoctoral researchers who plan to apply for competitive funding with a main public funding agency. Apply for up to 30 000 CHF for measures in preparation of the main funding application.

Deadline yearly; usually in February

UniBE Short Travel Grants for (Post)Docs

Enhance your mobility by undertaking a research stay of 2-8 weeks abroad and apply for up to 7 000 CHF for stays within Europe and up to 8 000 CHF for stays outside Europe.

Deadline twice a year; usually 1 March and 1 September

Promotion Fund

Apply for up to 5 000 CHF for activities that enhance your scientific network, e.g. organisation of a conference or workshop.

Deadlines twice a yearly; usually in spring and autumn

120% Care Grant

This grant for postdoc researchers with care responsibilities allows to temporarily reduce the workload through employment of a person supporting at work.

Deadlines four times a year

Databases for funding searches

The University of Bern is subscribed to two [databases of funding opportunities](#): Pivot-RP helps you in finding national and international funding opportunities, while Fundraiso focuses on funding opportunities beyond public funders in Switzerland.

Job Portals

The following job portals help you finding employment as a researcher in Switzerland and beyond:

<https://eth-gethired.ch/en>

<https://www.myscience.ch/jobs>

<https://www.academics.de>

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs>

For questions concerning academic career planning:

Dr. Matthias Hirt +41 (0)31 684 40 29 matthias.hirt@unibe.ch

Dr. Judith Zbinden +41 (0)31 684 48 05 judith.zbinden@unibe.ch

For questions concerning a planned application to a specific funding instrument:

Grants Office grantsoffice@unibe.ch