

Research Fellowship Program for Women in Science National Center of Competence in Research for Bio-Inspired Materials

Guidelines for applicants

The Research Fellowship Program for Women in Science of the National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) Bio-Inspired Materials seeks to support the professional development of outstanding researchers who have already demonstrated excellence at an early stage of their careers and wish to pursue an academic career. The fellowships support the residency of researchers in the laboratory of one of the research groups of the NCCR Bio-Inspired Materials. The grant is designed to fund original research ideas of the applicants and to leverage the impact through integration within the NCCR Bio-Inspired Materials and its international network. While being fully integrated in the NCCR Bio-Inspired Materials, the fellows have the possibility to apply to all other NCCR programs, grants and support actions for NCCR members (such as childcare support during travel).

Eligibility criteria

The following eligibility criteria must be fulfilled:

1. The program is open to female applicants of all nationalities who hold, or are about to earn, a doctoral degree in a relevant field of natural or life sciences, such as medicine, biology, biochemistry, chemistry, physics or materials science.
2. Application to the program is only possible within five years after the award of the first doctoral degree from a recognized University (reference dates are the application deadline and the date of the PhD defense). This timeframe can be extended if the candidate interrupted work due to maternity leave(s), in this case a detailed explanation must be included in the application.
3. Applicants who already submitted but did not yet defend their PhD thesis may submit an application, if their defense is scheduled for a date no later than 3 months after the application deadline. In this case, applicants must submit a certification of the submission of their doctoral thesis and of the planned date of their defense / degree. The award of the fellowship to such applicants is contingent upon successful defense within the timeframe stipulated above and the timely receipt of a copy of the degree certificate.
4. Researchers who are, or who have previously been affiliated with a research group or associated group of the NCCR Bio-Inspired Materials are not eligible to apply. The full list of NCCR research groups and associated groups can be found here: <http://bioinspired-materials.ch/about-us/people/research-groups/>
5. Applicants must be affiliated with a recognized university, research institution or industry at the time of application, they must have demonstrated excellence and outstanding performance in their previous positions, and express the explicit wish to pursue an academic career.
6. The official language of the program is English; applicants must be fluent in written and spoken English.

Applications not complying with these criteria will automatically be rejected on formal grounds.

Application process

Applications and queries should be submitted in English. The full applications should be submitted electronically in one single message with subject “Application NCCR PF17 – Your Name” to nccr-grants@unifr.ch. Applications must include the following five documents:

1. **Application form**, downloadable from the NCCR website. The applicant must choose one NCCR research group or associate group in whose laboratories she would like to be integrated, and provide the contact information of at least two references.
2. **Motivation letter** including statement of career goals (max. two pages).
3. **Complete CV** including list of publications and the contact of two references (max four pages).
4. **Copy of certificate of doctoral degree.**
5. **Project proposal.** The project proposal must be prepared using the template downloadable at the NCCR website. The proposal must include a discussion of the integration of the project within the selected research group, as well as contribution to current knowledge and to the mission of the NCCR. The proposal cannot exceed 5 pages.

In addition, **two recommendation letters are required.** These may not be submitted by the applicant together with the application, but must be e-mailed by the letter writers from institutional email accounts to the NCCR Coordinator (nccr-grants@unifr.ch; subject “Reference Your name”). Only two recommendation letters per applicant may be submitted. The applicant is responsible for requesting the submission of the recommendation letters to her references.

Application deadline

The call is open without deadline and applications will be treated and evaluated in a continuous manner. Please note that only one fellowship will be granted in this call.

The recommendation letters must be received at the same time as the application.

Evaluation

Fellowships will be offered on a competitive basis. Candidates will be selected based on their track record as a researcher, their potential to grow into academic leaders, the quality and originality of the project proposal, the match of the proposal with the overall theme of the NCCR Bio-inspired Materials, the feasibility of the proposed project in the host laboratory, and the anticipated synergies that arise from the integration into the NCCR Bio-Inspired Materials.

All applications will be assessed by a NCCR selection committee. Short listed candidates will then be invited to give a talk which will be followed by an interview with the selection committee.

The selection committee will rank and select the candidates. The selected candidates must accept the fellowship within 5 working days by submitting a signed confirmation of acceptance (including targeted start

date) both by postal mail and by e-mail to the NCCR Coordinator at nccr-grants@unifr.ch. In case of a declination or no response, the next-ranked candidate will be offered the fellowship.

Start and duration of grant

The duration of the research grant is 24 months. The grant cannot be extended and follow-up funding through NCCR project funds is not possible.

Start of grant: To be discussed, but before April 2018.

Attention: the process for obtaining a visa for Switzerland can take up to 3 months.

The research fellows must submit a final report to the NCCR Coordinator no later than 6 weeks after the end of their grant. The report must follow the guidelines provided by the NCCR coordinator.

Funding

The grant includes a standard researcher salary (100%) following the rules of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) for a period of 24 months. The costs of social charges of the employer are included in the grant. The grant additionally includes funds to cover research expenses up to total of CHF 29'000 for the entire funding period. The research funds contain a total travel allowance of CHF 5'000.

The grantee will be employed as researcher at the respective host institution (University of Fribourg, University of Geneva, ETHZ or EPFL), and therefore have a valid work contract during the entire funding period.

Contact

For any further information concerning the Research Fellowship Program for Women in Science of the NCCR Bio-Inspired Materials, please contact nccr-grants@unifr.ch.