University of Zurich
Human Resources
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Fact Sheet

FCS Scholarship Holders (Employment as PhD Candidates)

This English translation is provided for convenience purposes only. The original German text fully prevails.

Background

On 19 January 2021, at the request of the President and the International Relations Office and after consulting with the deans of the faculties, the Executive Board of the University decided to increase the university's contributions to FCS scholarships[1] in accordance with the pay rates for PhD candidates at UZH effective as of the next possible date. Additional funding for PhD candidates on an FCS scholarship thus becomes a prerequisite for their supervision. This step removes any previous unequal treatment of FCS scholarship holders compared to PhD candidates at UZH and FCS scholarship holders at ETH Zurich.

The Executive Board of the University instructed the International Relations Office and the Human Resources (HR) Department to determine the additional payment amounts for this based on the scholarship payment and SNSF pay rates, and to develop a consistent process to implement this increase.

Considering the already ongoing FCS scholarships, the faculties and/or institutes/departments are requested to implement the additional payments according to the following procedure and calculations/guidelines:

— From HS 2022 onwards, additional funding is mandatory for all upcoming supervisors who have not yet (status by spring semester 2021) committed to an FCS scholarship holder.

Remuneration/Differential Payments

FCS scholarship holders receive a scholarship of CHF 2'450 per month (29'400 per year) over a maximum period of 36 months. This amount is paid directly to the scholarship holders. Taking into account additional fringe benefits[2], the following payments result.

SNSF pay rates for PhD candidates are as follows (as in 2026, based on employment level of 80 %):

1st year	CHF 50,504.40 (= CHF 4,208.70 per month)
2nd year	CHF 52,114.95 (= CHF 4,342.90 per month)
3rd year	CHF 53,725.05 (= CHF 4,477.10 per month)

[1] PhD candidates on a scholarship from the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS).

[2] Allowances, admission and tuition fee(s), ½-fare travelcard and no withholding tax on scholarships.

Differential payment amounts are thus as follows[3]:

1st year	CHF 15'490 (= CHF 1,290 per month, of which CHF 100.00 as monthly share for the 13th month salary)
2nd year	CHF 17,425 (= CHF 1,452 per month, of which CHF 112.00 as monthly share for the 13th month salary)
3rd year	CHF 18,390 (= CHF 1,532 per month, of which CHF 118.00 as monthly share for the 13th month salary)

Salary Costs incl. Employer Benefits[4]

1st year	(incl. 17.2 % employer benefits) per month	CHF 1,513
2nd year	(incl. 17.2 % employer benefits) per month	CHF 1,702
3rd year	(incl. 17.2 % employer benefits) per month	CHF 1,797

These amounts as well as the differential payments are paid out in 13 equal installments.

Employment at UZH / Assignment to Pay Category

For the relevant differential payments to be made, scholarship holders must be employed at UZH. The costs for the differential payments are charged to the respective cost center of the department, institute or clinic.

Scholarship holders will be employed as teaching and research assistants and assigned to pay category 17/03, with their employment level reduced accordingly[5] :
Employment level in 1st year = 16 %
Employment level in 2nd year = 18 %
Employment level in3rd year = 19 %

Please note that for amounts exceeding the SNSF guidelines the Federal Commission for Scholarships (FCS) will reduce the Federal Scholarship accordingly.

Employment must be initiated through eHR. Employment classification on the employment decision must be given as teaching and research assistant, and the function as FCS PhD candidate (the employment decision must state clearly that the employee is an FCS PhD candidate/ "ESKAS- Doktorand*in").
The HR Department must be notified of any changes into the 2nd or 3rd year of employment (increase in employment level via eHR).

General Outline of Rights and Responsibilities

FCS scholarship holders are considered PhD candidates. Therefore, the general outline of rights and responsibilities for PhD candidates applies. Their protected time is based on the actual working hours as stated in their employment decision (Verfügung) as teaching and research assistants (16 %, 18 % or 19 %).

Employment as PhD Candidate beyond Third Year

FCS scholarships are awarded for a period of three years. If employment is extended after these three years, salary costs must be borne by the relevant department, institute or clinic. In this case, employment must be continued as a PhD candidate (at an employment level of 80 %) based on SNSF pay rates for fourth-year PhD candidates (CHF 53,725.05, as in 2026).
Entry of change in function in eHR (web application for HR tasks): MA Kreis: MO, P: 152, PK: VSAO[6].

[3] Amounts rounded.

[4] As in 2026

[5] As in 2026/ amounts rounded. Employment on xx, 5 % is possible.

[6] MA Kreis = employee circle; P = plan position; PK = pension fund

Work and Residence Permit

The HR Department will apply for a work and residence permit once all the required documents have been submitted to the HR Department (the documents have to be obtained from FCS PhD candidates by the relevant department, institute or clinic). The work and residence permit must be issued before PhD candidates take up employment. Employment may not begin without these permits. In addition to the above documents (according to eHR), the "Junior Academic Positions Form" ("Beiblatt Qualifikationsstelle") must also be included/uploaded. This form must state that the PhD candidate holds a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship and (in the comments field) include the fact that the PhD candidate will also be employed as a teaching and research assistant with an employment level of XY % to ensure equal treatment. Furthermore, the HR Department also requires confirmation of the Swiss federal government's scholarship decision (official notification).