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Who Should Apply

Excel beyond the boundary conditions

The ideal applicant to a Branco Weiss Fellowship has the competencies to design a surprisingly novel and scientifically rigorous research project which blazes new trails, profiting from the freedom uniquely offered by the fellowship. To give you an impression on what kind of qualifications a typical Branco Weiss Fellow should have, please check the [fellow profiles](#) ([branco-weiss-fellows.html](#)).

Before applying or contacting us, please read the information on this website carefully.

The registration portal for the 2021 fellowship intake is now [open](#) (<https://ethzurich.eventsair.com/bwf21/submission>), and will close on January 15, 2021, 11.59 p.m. (CET).

To avoid server-overload, please submit your application at least one or two days before the deadline.

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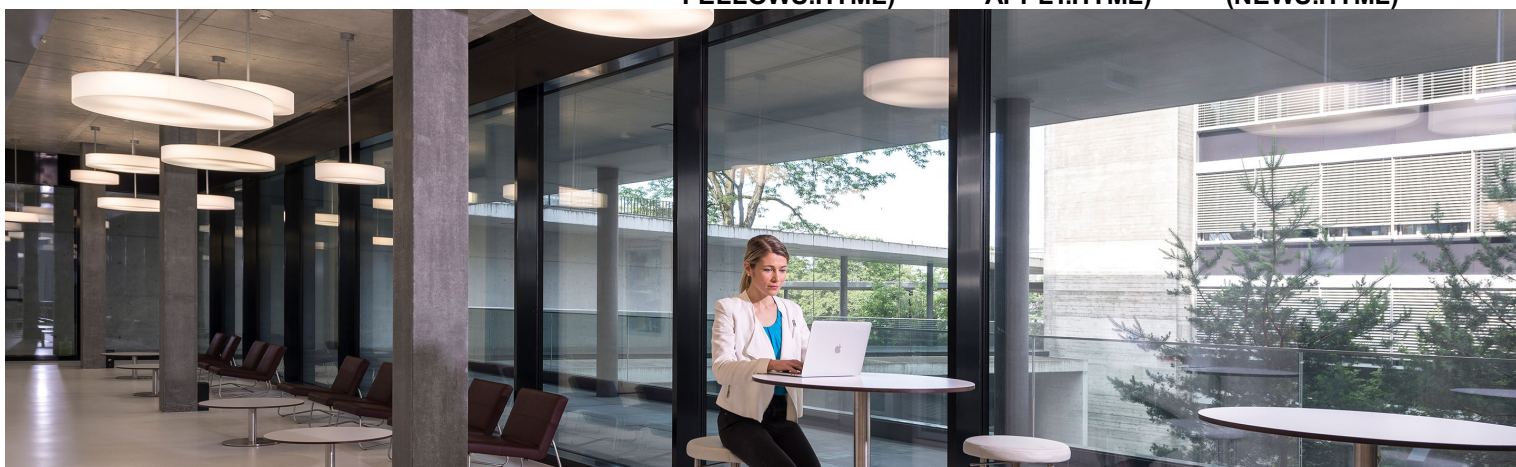
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Eligibility, Duration and Funding

Postdocs with the courage to go further

You are eligible for the 2021 intake if:

- You officially hold a PhD on January 15, 2021
- You have obtained your PhD a maximum of five years prior to January 15, 2021
- You do not hold or have held a faculty-equivalent position (e.g. assistant professor or lecturer)
- Your project departs from the mainstream of research in your discipline
- You have a record of outstanding scientific achievement
- You demonstrate in the proposal a willingness to engage in a dialogue on relevant social, cultural, political or economic issues across the frontiers of your particular discipline

Please note that we typically do not fund mainstream research projects that could also be funded by other scientific organizations.

If you have applied before and were not selected, you are welcome to apply again.

The following reasons for delays after attaining your PhD are acceptable:

- parental leave (max. one year per child)
- inability to work due to illness or accident

Applicants must explain their reasons for applying for an extension and provide the relevant documents. The number of weeks that the research work was interrupted is accepted as an extension.

Duration

Research projects should be conceived to last five years.

The first two years of a project are called the *Pioneer Phase*. At the end of the Pioneer Phase, a review and a site visit will be conducted. At this point, the project, its continued originality and the productivity of the fellow will be evaluated. If the results of the review and site visit are satisfactory, the fellow enters the *Exploitation Phase* for the remaining three years of the fellowship.

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Funding

A Branco Weiss Fellowship consists of CHF 100,000 per year. It may be used to cover all legitimate costs of research (i.e. salary and/or equipment, travel expenses, consumables, personnel, etc.).

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Timelines

The proposals are evaluated by the [directorate \(directorate-287.html\)](#), selected faculty members of ETH Zurich, and external reviewers. Short-listed candidates are invited for personal interviews, to be held in Zurich, Switzerland.

The following timeline applies for the 2021 fellowship intake:

- January 15, 2021, 11.59 p.m. CET: final deadline for applications via the online form
- May 2021: notification and invitation for a personal interview sent to final selection of candidates; notification sent to candidates whose application has been rejected
- June 2021: candidates interviewed by a panel in Zurich, Switzerland; final selection of fellows
- September 1 to December 31, 2021: fellows commence research projects

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Application

Applications for the 2021 fellowship intake are now open. Apply [here](https://ethzurich.eventsair.com/bwf21/submission)
(<https://ethzurich.eventsair.com/bwf21/submission>).

Please have the following documents (pdf files) ready for uploading:

- Letter of motivation including a statement explaining why your research differs from the mainstream (max. 1 page)
- Your proposed research project (max. 4 pages, including abstract, timelines and tentative milestones, references extra)
- Your CV (max. 4 pages)
- An invitation letter by your prospective host
- Copies of your three best publications (no doctoral theses, no books, only individual book chapters)
- [Application overview \(tl_files/content/download/Application_Material/BW_Application_Overview_2021.pdf\)](#) (pdf download), including a reasoning of why you believe that you are a perfect candidate for a Branco Weiss Fellowship (max. 1000 characters)

Please note that letters of support do not have to be submitted upon application. Budgets do not have to be submitted.

In preparing the description of your intended research, you may wish to give emphasis to the idea or concept forming the heart of the work, the methods you are planning to use, and the potential impact of the outcome both for your own subject and for other disciplines. In your proposal, you should also seek to present links between society and science that you wish to explore and promote.

All documents must be submitted as **PDF files** (max. 15 MB in total). Please use the following naming conventions for your documents and do not forget to add your family name:

- FamilyName_ApplicationOverview

- FamilyName_ResearchProposal
 - FamilyName _CV
 - FamilyName _MotivationLetter
 - FamilyName _HostLetter
 - FamilyName _Publication1
 - FamilyName _Publication2
 - FamilyName _Publication3
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Before applying, please read the [Frequently Asked Questions \(frequently-asked-questions.html\)](#) on this website carefully.



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Frequently Asked Questions

What is The Branco Weiss Fellowship, and what are its main goals?

The Branco Weiss Fellowship is a worldwide fellowship program, founded in 2002 and coordinated by [ETH Zurich](http://www.ethz.ch/en) (<http://www.ethz.ch/en>). It provides a platform for exceptionally qualified researchers from all disciplines demonstrating a willingness to engage in a dialogue on relevant social, cultural, political, or economic issues across the frontiers of their particular discipline. The fellowship is international and transdisciplinary in nature.

What is unique about The Branco Weiss Fellowship?

By comparison with other fellowships, The Branco Weiss Fellowship is unique in several respects.

Branco Weiss Fellows are expected to present novel approaches in their research, departing from the mainstream. The selection of the institute or research unit best suited to conduct the research rests with the fellows. Fellows may undertake their research anywhere in the world at any institution, even at multiple locations.

Who is behind The Branco Weiss Fellowship?

The fellowship is financed by the late Swiss entrepreneur [Dr. Branco Weiss \(the-founder.html\)](#) and administered as a fund by ETH Zurich. The [directors \(directorates-287.html\)](#) of the program, responsible for all scientific and operational aspects, are Heidi Wunderli-Allenspach, Rector at ETH Zurich (2007 to 2012) and former Full Professor for Biopharmacy at ETH Zurich; Angelika Steger, full professor of Computer Science at ETH Zurich; and Josef Zeyer, former full professor of Environmental Microbiology at the Institute of Biogeochemistry and Pollutant Dynamics at ETH Zurich. They are supported by additional faculty members of ETH Zurich to evaluate applications and conduct interviews with short-listed applicants.

How many fellowships will be granted?

The program aims to award up to ten fellowships each year. The actual number depends on the performance of the applicants during the interviews, taking into account not only scientific abilities of the candidates, but also their personal qualities and motivations. No effort will be made to award all ten fellowships.

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Scientists from what disciplines are eligible to apply for a fellowship?

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The Branco Weiss Fellowship is open to researchers at postdoctoral level in all disciplines.

What criteria beyond the formal criteria must applicants meet?

Applicants must submit a project that exploits new avenues of research, often transdisciplinary. They must also provide evidence of outstanding achievement in their particular scientific field and be willing to engage in a dialogue on relevant social, cultural, political, or economic issues across the frontiers of their particular discipline.

Where do applicants have to be in their career to apply?

Applicants must have officially completed their PhD by the application deadline, and they should not have received their PhD more than five years ago. Faculty members (assistant professors or lecturers) or former faculty members are not eligible.

What projects qualify for support?

Projects which depart significantly from mainstream research and will profit from the unique freedom offered by the fellowship. Ideal projects follow new paths in an interdisciplinary setting.

How does the financial support work?

Financial support is given to fellows in the form of a personal grant. This is administered by the host institution via a three-way contractual agreement between the fellow, their chosen institution(s), and ETH Zurich. Overheads must be covered by the host institution(s).

How does the selection procedure work?

All incoming applications are screened. Letters of recommendation and external reviews will be requested once the applicant has been short-listed. A final selection of applicants will be invited for interviews to present their project to the Directorate and selected faculty members of ETH Zurich in Zurich, Switzerland. The decision is typically communicated to candidates within two weeks after the interview.

What is the role of ETH Zurich in the fellowship?

The Branco Weiss Fellowship is domiciled and run by ETH Zurich. Founded in 1855 and located in the heart of Europe, ETH Zurich stands for world-class scientific experience, research for the benefit of society and industry, and the training of highly skilled professionals. A total of 21 Nobel Prize Laureates studied, taught, or carried out their research at ETH Zurich. Transferring knowledge from the university to the worlds of business, society, and politics is one of the strategic goals of ETH Zurich – equally important are first-rate education, excellent research, and maintaining a strong international network. The Branco Weiss Fellowship is just one of the means to achieve these ambitious goals.



