



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER

**Federal Commission for Scholarships
for Foreign Students FCS**

**Academic Year
2021-2022**

Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships for Foreign Students
at Swiss Higher Education Institutions

Internal Guidelines for Swiss Diplomatic Representations

Not for Diffusion to Applicants

Internet Link:
www.sbfi.admin.ch/scholarships_eng



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Important Dates and Contact

at latest August 30, 2020 Online documentation for applicants available on SERI Website
www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng

individually

Opening of call and submission deadline are defined by each Swiss diplomatic representation according to our survey in May

December 31, 2020

Applications by diplomatic pouch back to:
ESKAS Sekretariat
SBFI, Abteilung Hochschulen
Einsteinstrasse 2, 3003 Bern

Please indicate the number of applications included in your package.

May 21, 2020

All decisions for the academic year 2021-2022 are taken
by the Federal Commission for Scholarships and communicated

Contact

sgs@sbfi.admin.ch

T +41 58 463 26 75 Walter Grossenbacher-Mansuy



What's New in 2020?

Corona-virus pandemic The uncertainty surrounding the further development of the corona pandemic remains high.

The call for scholarships of the Swiss Confederation for the academic year 2021/22 is addressed to all countries included in the call for scholarships ('Octroi de bourses d'études') – regardless of the current corona pandemic situation.

Reservations Scholarships will be awarded subject to the rules in force at the start of the scholarship on 1 September 2021.

Whether or not a scholarship awarded in the future can actually be taken up depends, on the one hand, on the applicable rules of the countries of origin and the Swiss Confederation and, on the other hand, on various other conditions (such as health situation, visa procedures, opening of borders, university operation, etc.).

The situation is constantly being reassessed. It is not possible to give more precise details for the time being. Current information on the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships can be found on:

https://www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng as well as on

Twitter [@Swiss_FCS](https://twitter.com/Swiss_FCS)



Not new, but Good to Remember

Website	Looking for information about studying and living in Switzerland visit www.studyinswitzerland.plus presented by swissuniversities.
Instructional videos	One Minute Intro to the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRZjsHok5N4 (1:02) Introduction to the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpHDBWURJNA (5:03) Before contacting a supervising professor https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp4NnqZ2T00 (1:44)
Submission in country of origin	All candidates have to submit their application at the specified contact (normally the Swiss Embassy) responsible for their country of origin. Only under well founded circumstances an exception is negotiable. For more see FAQ II, page 23.
Admission required	For doctoral school candidates an admission confirmation is required.
Recommendation letter	No copies of the two confidential recommendation letters are requested. Two different originals in two sealed envelopes only per candidate.
Arts Scholarships	These scholarships are only valid to pursue an initial Master's degree in Switzerland. Candidates already holding a Master's degree will not be considered.



ESKAS/FCS: Objectives and Credit

Since 1961 each year the Swiss Confederation awards Government Scholarships (current legal basis: Federal Act of 19 June 1987 on Scholarships for Foreign Scholars and Artists).

➤ **Main objectives**

- 1) to offer young talented academics from developing and industrialised countries an advanced further education and
- 2) to offer young foreign artists a qualification in Switzerland

➤ **Credit**

9.6 Mio. CHF per year

(see dispatch on Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2017-2020)

How ESKAS works:



For details see pages 7 to 10



How ESKAS/FCS Works I: Allocation

The Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships are an instrument based on the **Confederation's international strategy for education, research and innovation** (ERI), June 2010.

- **Allocation by the Federal Council** (*see internal document: «octroi de bourses d'études»*)
 - 1) Each year the Federal Council decides about the granting of new scholarships to selected countries. The allocation of **the number of scholarships** results from the **appointment formula** with ERI priority countries, industrialised countries with reciprocity (direct or in the framework of a pool) and regional pools of countries.
 - 2) **90%** of the scholarships are for young **post-graduate researchers**.
10% of the scholarships are for **art students**. The art scholarships are available to students from a limited number of countries only based on reciprocity.
 - 3) The research scholarships are **split between developing and industrialised countries**.



How ESKAS/FCS Works II: Eligibility

The Federal Council mandates the members of the **Federal Commission for Scholarships** (FCS aka ESKAS or CFBE) to execute the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships programme.

- **Eligibility for young researchers** *(for details see pages 13-15)*
 - Completed Master's degree or PhD.
 - Research or study at all Swiss cantonal universities, universities of applied sciences and the two federal institutes of technology.
 - Only candidates nominated by an academic supervisor at one of the above mentioned higher education institutions.
- **Eligibility for art students** *(for details see page 16)*
 - Art students wishing to pursue their initial Master's degree.
 - Study at a public Swiss conservatory or university of the arts.
 - Scholarships are only awarded to students admitted to an eligible institution.
- **Eligibility in general**
 - Only complete candidatures with correctly filled application forms are accepted for the evaluation. Ineligible or incomplete candidatures are refused by the Swiss Embassy.

How ESKAS/FCS Works III: Assessment

The members of ESKAS/FCS – delegates of all Swiss cantonal universities and the federal institutes of technology and a representative of swissuniversities – **assess and rank** the eligible candidatures based on a set of selection criteria. The selection procedure is organised by the ESKAS/FCS secretariat, International Scholarships Unit at the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation.

- **Assessment of all eligible applications**
 - 1) Evaluation of **the candidate**: academic profile, motivation and research capacity
 - 2) Evaluation of **the research project**: originality and methodological soundness
 - 3) Evaluation of **the academic context**: quality and context of supervision, the appropriateness of the host institution and the potential for future academic cooperation.
- **Ranking A, B or C**
 - Category A: Highly competitive candidatures
 - Category B: Fairly competitive candidatures
 - Category C: Below average competitive candidature, no scholarship award, no waiting list place available.
- **All eligible candidatures are carefully assessed and ranked.**



How ESKAS/FCS Works IV: Selection

Based on the excellence assessment and the ranking of all candidatures the ESKAS/FCS takes the final decisions during **the selection meetings in March and May**.

➤ **Additional elements for the selection**

Considered are e.g. the candidate's stage of her/his academic career, the overall mix of the different scholarship types, and the disciplinary diversity.

➤ **Available funds**

The available budget determines how many scholarships can be awarded per country and per regional pool.

Due to the consequent number of applications of a high quality level the Commission was faced in the past years with a very difficult selection. A high number of «categories A & B» applications could not be awarded with a scholarship. Even some excellent «category A» applications (see page 9) could not be considered.

The Swiss Embassies are informed separately after the ESKAS/FCS selection meeting about the decisions. Beside «Main Candidates MC» the Commission selects a restricted number of «Reserve Candidates RC» for the waiting list. Should one of the MC decide to refuse the grant a RC may be promoted. Its selection is depending on different elements as e.g. the scholarship type, the assessment, the research field and/or the university.

➤ **Retention rate**

For the last few years the overall retention rate was between 15-20%.

Your Main Tasks at the Embassy

The Swiss diplomatic representations are the entry point for all applicants for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship. Their main tasks are:

- **Transmitting** the FCS Scholarship Offer to the relevant national authorities and if necessary coordinating the national application process.
- **Providing** the application documents («application package» see attached zip folder) as well as all the necessary information to the prospective candidates.
- **Receiving** the applications and **controlling** that they are complete, in the right order and they fulfill all requirements. **Returning** incomplete applications and informing the applicants.
- *Optional – not required by the FCS Commission: Interviewing*
Inviting the pre-selected candidates for an interview. Such an interview is always a plus and is appreciated by the FCS. The Commission is aware of the workload which this represents for the diplomatic representations though.
- **Sending** all formally correct requests (see p. 19): For each candidate **2 sets of applications** by diplomatic pouch to Berne **by December 31, 2020** at the latest.
- **Informing** all candidates whose applications are directly rejected by the Swiss Diplomatic Representation or the National Authorities. Those candidates must receive a written communication explaining why their application has not been taken into consideration for the second round and as a consequence was not short-listed and not sent to the FCS.
- Candidatures with correct and evaluated applications are informed by the FCS directly.



General Remarks

➤ Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship types:

Research:	- Research fellowships	Postgraduate level
	- PhD scholarships	Postgraduate level
	- PostDoc scholarships	Postgraduate level
Arts:	- Art scholarships	Master level (only initial MA degree)

- Precise information regarding the different scholarship types as well as regarding the eligibility criteria are available on the FCS webpage (online from August 30, 2020):
www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng
- Please verify which scholarship types are offered to your country of accreditation on the website: www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_eng
- Application documents are available exclusively in English.



Types of Scholarships Research Fellowships

Target group



Highly qualified postgraduate researchers from all academic fields as well as young medical doctors.

Duration



12 months maximum (starting in September); no prolongation possible. The research fellowship cannot be upgraded into a prolongable PhD scholarship.



Grant applications for stays lasting less than 9 months will not be treated as a priority. Grant applications for stays lasting less than 6 months will be rejected.

Eligibility criteria and specific conditions



Master's degree or equivalent university degree achieved **before 31 July 2021** (degree certificate) recognised by the Swiss university. As a proof, the degree has to be submitted to the Federal Commission for Scholarships before the start of the scholarship.



Applicants must be born after **31 December 1985**.



Applicants who have been in Switzerland since more than one year at the beginning of the scholarship in September are not eligible. Reference document if applicable: residence permit to be added to the application documents.



Applicants must provide a letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the research. Without such specific support letter, the application will be rejected.



Applicants must have a research proposal including a timeframe. This is the centrepiece of the application. The applicant must devote all required attention to it.



Applicants must be in command of the necessary language skills required for the research/studies.



Applicants who have already benefited from a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship are not eligible to apply for a second scholarship.



Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.



Types of Scholarships

PhD Scholarships

Target group

- ⇒ Highly qualified postgraduate students (possessing the required degrees) from all academic fields.

Duration

- ⇒ 12 months (starting in September) prolongable up to 36 months based on the achieved academic results.

Eligibility criteria and specific conditions

- ⇒ Master's degree or equivalent university degree achieved **before 31 July 2021** (degree certificate) recognised by the Swiss university. As a proof, the degree has to be submitted to the Federal Commission for Scholarships before the start of the scholarship.
- ⇒ Applicant's date of birth after **31 December 1985**.
- ⇒ Applicants must provide a letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the PhD thesis. Without such specific support letter, the application will be rejected.
- ⇒ If an assistant professor supports a candidature, a full professor who is entitled to supervise the PhD during the entire scholarship has to co-sign the support letter.
- ⇒ Applicants must have a research proposal including a timeframe. This is the centrepiece of the application. The applicant must devote all required attention to it.
- ⇒ Applicants must be in command of the necessary language skills required for the PhD studies/ research.
- ⇒ Applicants who have been in Switzerland since more than one year at the beginning of the scholarship in September are not eligible. Reference document if applicable: residence permit to be added to the application documents.
- ⇒ Applicants who have already benefited from a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship are not eligible to apply for a second scholarship. Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.

PLEASE NOTE:

- ⇒ The FCS application for a PhD scholarship and the application for admission by a Swiss University for a PhD study are two separate procedures.
- ⇒ The admission to a PhD study at your chosen Swiss University is a *conditio sine qua non* for a potential attribution of a FCS scholarship - but no guarantee though for a positive decision by the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students FCS. It is the applicant's responsibility to manage both procedures in parallel.
- ⇒ There are two different ways to achieve a doctorate degree (aka PhD).
 - ⇒ The first way consists in undertaking **doctoral studies under the supervision of an academic mentor** (supervisor). In this case, the **admission to the PhD takes place after the scholarship start**.
 - ⇒ The second way consists in **being admitted to a doctoral school**, which provides the framework for the following doctoral studies. Please inquire your admission directly at the corresponding school.
- ⇒ In addition to all other application documents (including the support letter from a supervisor), the **admission letter from the doctoral school is required with the application dossier**. As this takes time applicants must plan accordingly and submit their application for admission to the doctoral school sufficiently in advance of the scholarship programme deadline.
- ⇒ If the chosen doctoral school does not allow you to contact a supervisor before being admitted to the school, the application for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship is not possible.



Types of Scholarships

PostDoc Scholarships

Target group

- ⇒ Highly qualified postdoctoral researchers at the beginning of their academic career from all academic fields. No funding for sabbaticals.

Duration

- ⇒ 12 months (starting in September); no prolongation possible. Grant applications for stays lasting less than 9 months will not be treated as a priority. Grant applications for stays lasting less than 6 months will be rejected.

Eligibility criteria and specific conditions

- ⇒ **PhD degree achieved after 31 December 2017 and before 31 July 2021** (PhD degree certificate) recognised by the Swiss university. As a proof, the degree has to be submitted to the Federal Commission for Scholarships before the start of the scholarship.
- ⇒ Applicants who have been in Switzerland since more than one year at the beginning of the scholarship in September are not eligible. Reference document if applicable: residence permit to be added to the application documents.
- ⇒ Applicants must provide a letter from an academic host professor (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why she/he is willing to supervise and support the postdoctoral research. Without such specific support letter, the application will be rejected.
- ⇒ Not accepted as academic supervisors for postdoctoral scholarship applicants are their former PhD mentors and their co-directors for the cotutelle PhD if the academic supervisor is at a Swiss university.
- ⇒ Applicants must have a research proposal including a timeframe. This is the centrepiece of the application. The applicant must devote all required attention to it.
- ⇒ Applicants must be in command of the necessary language skills required for the postdoctoral research.
- ⇒ Applicants who have already benefited from a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship are not eligible to apply for a second scholarship. Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.



Types of Scholarships

Arts Scholarships

Target group	⇒ Highly qualified young artists - from all artistic fields - wishing to pursue an initial master's degree. These scholarships are only offered to citizens of countries with which Switzerland has reciprocity agreements for art scholarships.
Duration	⇒ 12 months (starting in September), prolongable up to 21 months at most depending on the Master programme chosen and the necessary ECTS credits.
Eligibility criteria and specific conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Bachelor's degree or equivalent.⇒ Applicants must be born after 31 December 1985.⇒ Applicants should must begin their scholarship no later than three years after graduating with their Bachelor's degree.⇒ Applicants who have been in Switzerland since more than one year at the beginning of the scholarship in September are not eligible. Reference document if applicable: residence permit to be added to the application documents.⇒ Applicants must be in command of the necessary language skills required for the Master's programme.⇒ Scholarship holders are expected to move to Switzerland during their grant period.⇒ Only valid to pursue an initial master course. Applicants for arts and music cannot apply for a second master's degree.⇒ Applicants who have already benefited from a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship are not eligible to apply for a second scholarship.⇒ PLEASE NOTE: The application for a FCS Arts Scholarship and the application for admission by your chosen Swiss conservatory or art school (university of applied sciences) are two separate procedures. FCS applicants have to document that an institution has accepted them or that they are being considered for admission. This may be in the form of a conditional acceptance pending an entry exam or other specific requirements.⇒ Without such a document, the application will be rejected.

This type of scholarship is available for the following countries only:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, United States of America



Application Package

The 2021-2022 application package has to be sent by e-mail* to the prospective candidates. It includes:

1. Application guidelines for candidates 2021-2022

In order to help the candidates in their application procedure the FCS provides these guidelines. They outline all the important information and requirements to prepare a good application. We kindly ask you to distribute those guidelines for candidates alongside the other application documents.

2. Application form 2021-2022*

3. Research proposal form

4. Confidential letter of reference form

5. Medical certificate form

6. Leaflet «Will you be my supervisor?»

-
- * There is a large phishing and internet fraud taking place and it is not safe to have the application documents online. Therefore the application documents should not be posted on the Embassy's webpages.
Please distribute the application documents only upon request by e-mail.
Thank you for your cooperation!



Formal Acceptance Criteria

- ✓ The candidate applies for 1 Swiss university only.
- ✓ The candidate applies for 1 scholarship type only.
- ✓ A copy of **the specific letter from an academic host professor** (including her/his short CV) at the chosen Swiss university confirming why he/she is willing to supervise and support the research is included.
- ✓ **For doctoral school applicants:** In addition to all other application documents (including the support letter from a supervisor – no FCS form), the admission letter from the doctoral school is required with the application dossier. If the chosen doctoral school does not allow you to contact a supervisor before being admitted to the school, the application for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship is not possible.
- ✓ **A complete and signed research project proposal** using exclusively the FCS research proposal form is submitted.
- ✓ **The application is signed and complete** according to the checklist provided for Swiss Embassies.



Formal Exclusion Criteria

Applications must not be taken into consideration by the Swiss diplomatic representation if they are in one of the following situations:

- X** The applicant does not fulfill the eligibility criteria stated on the FCS website and in the application guidelines.
- X** The application does not include 1) an invitation letter from a professor in Switzerland willing to supervise and support the research and if applicable 2) a document confirming that the candidate is admitted, if applying to a doctoral school.
- X** Applicants may not be resident in Switzerland since more than a year when they start their grant next September. Otherwise they are not eligible. Date on residence permit is decisive.
- X** The application is incomplete, does not respect the guidelines, does not include the proper FCS forms, is not submitted with two sets of documents or is badly prepared.
- X** Applicants for Arts and Music cannot apply for a second Master's degree.
- X** Applicants who have already benefited from a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship are not eligible for a second grant.

All applicants whose applications are rejected by the Swiss Diplomatic Representation or the National Authorities must receive a written communication by the respective entity explaining the reasons (based on the applied selection criteria) why their application has not been taken into consideration for the second round and as a consequence has not been sent to the FCS in Switzerland.



Warning: Fake Scholarship Offers

➤ What to do in case of requests regarding fake scholarship offers (phishing attempts)?

Please send a copy of the fake scholarship e-mail including the e-mail header to: sgs@sbfi.admin.ch. Do not hesitate to share the following information with your social environment. (Please see next page for French and German version.)

English:

Warning against fake scholarship offers using the name of the Swiss Government (Phishing)

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation issues this warning against fake Swiss Federal Government Scholarships advertised by e-mail or published on social medias. Through these fake scholarship offers, crooks try to lead their victims to money transfers (under the pretence of visa and social insurance costs for example). The Swiss Federal Commission for Scholarships (FCS) recommends never to answer to these e-mails and above all not to send any money. Please note that the application for a Swiss Government Scholarship is free of charge.

The scholarship offers of the Swiss Federal Commission for Scholarships are managed exclusively by the official diplomatic representation of Switzerland in the country of origin of the applicants.

Do not hesitate to share this information with your social environment.

Italian:

Avviso: tentativi di truffa relativi alle borse di studio della Confederazione Svizzera (phishing)

La Segreteria di Stato per la formazione, la ricerca e l'innovazione mette in guardia da falsi concorsi comunicati via e-mail o tramite i social network relativi alle candidature per le borse di studio della Confederazione Svizzera. Con queste false offerte di borse di studio i truffatori cercano di convincere le vittime a effettuare versamenti di denaro, ad esempio per coprire i costi dell'assicurazione sociale o del visto.

La Commissione federale delle borse per studenti stranieri (CFBS) raccomanda di non rispondere a queste offerte e soprattutto di non versare denaro. L'invio delle candidature per le borse di studio della Confederazione svizzera è infatti gratuito.

Le offerte della Commissione federale delle borse per studenti stranieri sono gestite esclusivamente dalla rappresentanza diplomatica ufficiale della Svizzera nel Paese d'origine del richiedente.

Vi preghiamo di diffondere questo avviso tra i vostri conoscenti.



Warning: Fake Scholarship Offers

German:

Warnung vor Betrugsversuchen im Namen der Schweizer Regierungsstipendien (Phishing)

Das Staatssekretariat für Bildung, Forschung und Innovation warnt vor falschen Aufrufen zu Bewerbungen für Schweizer Bundesstipendien, welche via E-Mail oder über die Sozialen Medien verbreitet werden. Mit diesen gefälschten Stipendienofferten versuchen Trickbetrüger ihre Opfer zu Geldtransfers zu verleiten (z.B. unter dem Vorwand von Visa- und Sozialversicherungskosten).

Die Eidgenössische Stipendienkommission für ausländische Studierende (ESKAS) empfiehlt der Öffentlichkeit, nicht auf solche gefälschten Stipendienofferten zu antworten und auf keinen Fall Geld zu überweisen. Das Einreichen einer Bewerbung für ein Stipendium der Schweizer Regierung ist kostenlos.

Die Stipendienofferten der Eidgenössischen Stipendienkommission für ausländische Studierende werden ausschliesslich durch die offizielle diplomatische Vertretung der Schweiz im Heimatland des Bewerbers verwaltet.

Bitte verbreiten Sie diese Warnung in Ihrem Umfeld.

French:

Mise en garde contre les tentatives d'escroqueries aux bourses d'études suisses (phishing)

Le Secrétariat d'Etat à la formation, à la recherche et à l'innovation met en garde contre un faux appel à candidatures pour des bourses de la Confédération suisse diffusé par courrier électronique ou sur des réseaux sociaux. Des escrocs essaient d'amener leurs victimes à des transferts d'argent (par exemple sous prétexte de frais de visa ou de frais d'assurances sociales).

La Commission fédérale des bourses pour étudiants étrangers (CFBE) recommande au public de ne pas répondre à de telles offres et surtout de ne pas verser d'argent. Le dépôt d'un dossier de candidature à une bourse fédérale suisse est gratuit.

Les offres de bourses de la Commission fédérale des bourses pour étudiants étrangers sont gérées exclusivement par les représentations diplomatiques officielles de la Suisse dans le pays d'origine des candidats.

N'hésitez pas à diffuser cet avertissement dans votre entourage.



FAQs I

➤ **Selection criteria**

Which are the selection criteria for Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships?

The three following aspects and selection criteria are mainly considered:

- 1) The candidate: academic profile, research capacity and motivation.
- 2) The research project: originality and methodological soundness.
- 3) The academic context: quality and context of supervision and potential for future academic cooperation.

➤ **Degree not achieved yet**

Can we accept applications from candidates who didn't finish their Master degree yet but will do so before the start of the scholarship?

Yes, if the candidate completes his/her degree by the end of next August before the start of the scholarship next September.

➤ **PhD scholarship support letter**

Is the confirmation of receipt of application by the Graduate Institute (IHEID) in Geneva, the EPFL doctoral school or any other doctoral programme sufficient?

No. A support letter by an academic host professor is required in any case additionally.



FAQs II

➤ **Double citizenship**

How should applicants proceed if they are double citizenship holders?

Double citizen are free to choose the country of origin where they prefer to submit their application. Swiss double citizen who are living abroad are allowed to submit a candidature. Double citizen have to submit copies of all their passports.

➤ **Country of origin vs. country of residence**

Is it possible that candidates submit their application dossier to another Swiss diplomatic representation than the representation of the candidate's country of origin?

All candidates for a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship have to submit their application at the specified contact (normally the Swiss Embassy) responsible for their country of origin.

The experience made by the secretariat of the Federal Commission for Scholarships in Bern during the last few years shows that a free choice by the candidates between submitting an application in the country of residence vs. the country of origin creates a too high administrative burden in Berne. Therefore in 2019 only well founded exceptions to the rule mentioned above are manageable. Such cases should only cover candidates facing really difficult conditions (political, economic, social situation) that prevent them from submitting the dossier in their country of origin. Formal reasons as e.g. meeting a submission deadline or convenience will not be accepted as exceptions by the FCS secretariat any more.

For all other rare particular cases the FCS secretariat has to be informed about it beforehand (at sgs@sbfi.admin.ch). Both concerned Swiss diplomatic representations (the one in the country of the applicant's temporary residence and the other in the country of her/ his origin) have to agree to this exceptional procedure. These candidates will be treated by the FCS according to their country of origin.



FAQs III

➤ **University admission to the doctoral school***

How should a candidate proceed when she/he doesn't know at the moment of submission of the dossier if she/he will be accepted or not?

In such cases a valid candidature is not possible at this stage of the procedure. For doctoral school applicants: In addition to all other application documents (including the support letter from a supervisor), the admission letter from the doctoral school is required with the application dossier. If the chosen doctoral school does not allow you to contact a supervisor before being admitted to the doctoral school, the application for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship is not possible.

* There are basically two different ways to achieve a doctorate degree (aka PhD). The first and best-known way consists in undertaking doctoral studies under the supervision of an academic mentor (supervisor). The second way consists in being admitted to a doctoral school (aka doctoral programme) which provides the framework for the following doctoral studies.

➤ **Attested translations of certificates and grade sheets**

If the certificates and grade sheets from previously attended universities/ colleges are not in English, French, Italian or German attested certified translations have to be provided. These certified translations may be photocopies.

➤ **Rerun**

Is it possible for rejected candidates to re-apply a second time for a scholarship?

Yes. They have to submit a new application form and of course fulfill all eligibility criteria.



FAQs IV

- **In order my application to be complete I need a confirmation letter of my host professor that he/she is willing to supervise me. Must this letter be a signed original or is it enough to be a scanned one?**
A scanned document from an original is ok.
- **May the REFERENCE letter (FCS form) be written by an already retired professor?**
Yes, this is acceptable for the reference letter.
- **May the SUPPORT letter (no FCS form) from the Swiss academic host be written by an already retired professor or a professor who will be retired next year?**
No, both is not acceptable for the support letter.
- **Is feedback from the embassy on the individual candidatures at all welcome? What happens to them?**
The member of the Federal Commission for Scholarships gladly accept the feedback and let it flow into their considerations.



The Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students appreciates all efforts with the aim of staying in contact with the former scholarship holders.

In case your Embassy plans to invite ESKAS alumni to future events and receptions this information may be useful to you.

➤ **Support by the ESKAS secretariat**

The ESKAS secretariat is ready to provide you with an updated list of names and e-mail addresses of the former scholarship holders from the country you are based in.
Please ask for such a list at: sgs@sbfi.admin.ch

➤ **Thank you for sharing your activities with ESKAS alumni**

The ESKAS secretariat appreciates all your feedback, short reports, images of your events with former scholarship holders: sgs@sbfi.admin.ch. We will gladly distribute those to the members of the Federal Commission for Scholarship and at the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI.

**«This scholarship provides
not only general financial support
but also social and personal support.»**

ESKAS grant holder from Indonesia

Secretariat FCS · ESKAS · CFBE
Federal Commission for Scholarships for foreign students
International Scholarships SERI
3003 Bern

www.sbfi.admin.ch/scholarships_eng