

Guidelines for MedLab Fellowships

June 2024

Article 1 Objectives

- ¹ The MedLab Program is a Fellowship program initiated by ETH Zurich, dedicated to medical doctors holding a Dr. med. on their way to the “Facharzttitel”.
- ² The MedLab Program awards Fellowships to MDs with a prior record of research and the goal to further deepen their research knowledge (e.g., in basic research, methodology, novel technologies and applications) as well as design and conduct an own clinical research project.
- ³ The purpose of the MedLab Fellowship is twofold:
 - a. To attract, educate and train talents in the medical research domain by enhancing their scientific profile and supporting their scientific independence at an early stage in their career.
 - b. To convey research methodology and novel technologies and offer the means to successfully conduct clinical research.
- ⁴ The MedLab fellowship provides access to top-notch scientific training and strengthens the collaboration between hospitals and ETH Zurich within the framework of a concrete project. The program is competitive with only a limited number of fellowships available each year. The duration of a MedLab Fellowship is one year full-time to a maximum of three years part-time.
- ⁵ Applications have to be made jointly by the applicant and their host, who must be a professor at ETH Zurich and who will act as mentor for the Fellow.

Article 2 Personal requirements

- ¹ The MedLab Fellowships are open to MDs (“Assistenzärztinnen und -ärzte”) on their way to the “Facharzttitel” from all disciplines and citizens of any nationality, practicing and resident in Switzerland.
- ² At the time of the submission deadline, applicants must hold a Dr. med. and have at least 1 year of clinical experience.
- ³ Applicants must show prior research experience and provide evidence of their ability to independently conduct the proposed research project.

Article 3 Application

- ¹ There is one MedLab Fellowship call per year. Submission deadline is 01 March. Applications for MedLab Fellowships must be written in English and submitted electronically and as a single pdf-file via [submission form](#).
- ² The application must include:
 - a. A cover sheet in which the Fellowship candidate is identified and basic information is given (position, institution, address, email) and in which the title of the project, funds requested and key words/ disciplines are indicated. The ETH host professor associated with the proposal must also be clearly identified.

- b. An abstract of the research proposal (max. 300 words).
 - c. A letter of motivation including a statement explaining why the planned research is original and a justification why the candidate is qualified for the MedLab Fellowship and the proposed research.
 - d. A detailed research proposal, including the state of research, the research plan, milestones and expected results. The research plan should include sufficient scientific and technical details for the reviewers to be able to evaluate the proposal for originality, feasibility and impact potential. The scientific proposal should not exceed five pages (A4, single line spacing, 11-point Arial font or equivalent), excluding references.
 - e. A budget outlining the requested project funds and justification.
 - f. The applicant's curriculum vitae with a brief description of the candidate's research achievements (max. 2 pages) and including a list of publications (max. 2 pages without publications), diplomas (including a copy of the doctoral degree).
 - g. The host ETH Zurich professor's curriculum vitae including a list of publications (max. 2 pages without publications).
 - h. A letter of support by the applicant's host clinic.
- ³ The application must also include a letter of support signed by the ETH Zurich host professor, stating her/his support of the project and detailing the level of independence and the scientific autonomy that will be granted to the MedLab Fellow in the event of acceptance. Additionally, the letter must confirm that the host professor is willing to:
- a. Provide 1/3 of the awarded fellowship funds (1/3 of CHF 200'000),
 - b. Integrate the MedLab Fellow in her/his laboratory at the research institution,
 - c. Provide the MedLab Fellow with a workplace and access to the infrastructure required to successfully complete the proposed research work during the approved funding period,
 - d. Share potential additional research expenses of the MedLab Fellow (e.g. for consumables, equipment, personnel, travel, etc.).
- ⁴ Applications will be rejected for formal reasons if they are not complying with the guidelines or do not include all the requested information.
- ⁵ In case of a negative decision, it is not possible to resubmit a revised version of a previous MedLab Fellowship application.

Article 4 Funding

- ¹ Fellowships include the MedLab Fellows' own salary and project funds. The total funds per MedLab Fellowship may not exceed CHF 200'000 for the entire grant, including salary, social security contributions and project costs/consumables.
- ² The amount allocated to the MedLab Fellow's salary is determined in accordance with ETH Zurich's standard conditions for postdoc salaries.
- ³ Annual funds of max. CHF 100'000 are available for project costs/consumables directly related to the approved project, which are covered by the Fellowship as follows:
- a. Running, maintenance and material costs such as consumables, animal purchase/ experimental costs, field expenses, cost of computing time, small items of equipment.

- b. Direct costs for the use of infrastructure such as user/ service fees for machine time/ technology platforms or for rental fees.
- ⁴ Project funds may not be used to fund doctoral students, secretarial or office expenses, and basic IT or lab infrastructure of the host professor.

Article 5 Evaluation procedure

- ¹ The selection of the MedLab Fellows will be performed by an Evaluation Committee composed of 8 representatives.
- ² The evaluation procedure comprises two phases. Phase 1 consists of a preselection of candidates based on the written application. Candidates who do not qualify for Phase 2 are informed in writing within a month of the application. Candidates whose applications pass the first step will be invited to an interview.
- ³ The interviews last about 30 minutes and are mandatory. During the interview, candidates will present their research project and will be asked questions about their project, the choice of the research lab, as well as about their future career prospects. The host professor is expected to cover the travel expenses associated with the interview. In certain circumstances (e.g. long distance travel or exceptional scheduling difficulties), the interview may be held as a video conference.
- ⁴ The Evaluation Committee will make its funding recommendation to the Vice President Research, who takes the final funding decision.
- ⁵ Notification of the decision will usually be given within 2 months of the submission deadline.

Article 6 Evaluation criteria

- ¹ Applications are evaluated by the Evaluation Committee composed of representatives of ETH Zurich.
- ² Specific review criteria for the evaluation procedure include:
- a. The candidate's aptitude with respect to his/her research performance, potential and competence for the proposed project.
 - b. The project's relevance and practical impact and synergy / added value of the collaboration between the candidate and the host professor.
 - c. Scientific excellence of the research proposal assessed in terms of:
 - i. Originality/novelty of research objective and/or research plan.
 - ii. Suitability and quality of research approach/ work method.
 - iii. Feasibility of the project with respect to resources, management and organisation.

Article 7 Ethical issues

The applicant must state on Form Z01_Ethical Issues if the intended research requires authorization or notification. By filling in the form and signing the cover sheet the applicant confirms that they are aware of the legal regulations at the federal and cantonal levels that are relevant to the research project. Once a fellowship has been accepted for funding, copies of the authorization or notification must be sent to medlab@ethz.ch.

Furthermore, it gives instructions as to how to proceed if the intended research needs authorization or notification. This applies in particular to research on humans, research on human embryonic stem cells, research on animals, research on GMO or pathogens and research in developing countries.

Article 8 Gender issues

ETH Zurich strives to promote gender equality in scientific research by integrating the gender dimension into the research content in all fields of research. Research in gender studies is also supported through the ETH Zurich MedLab programme.

If the proposed research involves human subjects (e.g. as patients, consumers, users or as citizens in surveys), gender must be consistently taken into account from the proposal to the research and dissemination phase as well as in the experimental design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the outcomes. If gender aspects are not addressed a justification must be supplied.

Research not involving human subjects should adopt the principles of gender-sensitive research where appropriate (e.g. fundamental research on genomics, development of materials for use in the biomedical sector, product design).

Article 9 Reporting

¹ A scientific and financial final report is due upon completion of the project, including all relevant outcomes (publications, patents, presentations, etc.).

Article 10 Applicable law

Subject to any specific provisions in these Regulations, the provisions of ETH Zurich apply.

Prof. Christian Wolfrum

Vice President for Research

ETH Zurich, 20 06 2024