



Call for Proposals 2024

Career Development Award

Submission Deadline for Letter of Intent: 5 May 2024

Dementia Research Switzerland - Synapsis Foundation announces a **Career Development Award** competition. This funding mechanism supports advanced postdoctoral researchers at Swiss universities and research institutions who seek to establish themselves as independent researchers in the field of dementia research. The goal of this award is to accelerate their transition to a faculty position in Switzerland or EMBO member countries.

The Synapsis Foundation Career Development Award consists of 2 phases:

- Phase 1 is carried out as a postdoctoral fellow in a host laboratory.
- Phase 2 supports the researcher in an independent faculty position.

For more details on the eligibility criteria for both phases please see page 3.

TOPICS

The Synapsis Foundation supports research projects on neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease. Topics span from basic and translational research to clinical approaches and include:

- Research in genetics, molecular and cell biology to gain new insights into pathomechanisms
- Innovative clinical approaches towards
 - an early diagnosis, including biomarkers
 - new therapeutic interventions
 - prevention studies
- Novel technological developments, including artificial intelligence/e-health, that support the diagnosis, treatment and prediction of the course of the disease
- Psychosocial interventions for people with dementia
- Proof-of-principle studies

FUNDING

Funding is a **maximum of CHF 100'000 per year** for up to four years (phase 1 and 2 together). **Institutions may not charge indirect or overhead costs on this award.**

APPLICATION FOR PHASE 1

Synopsis Foundation is introducing a **two-step application process for phase 1 of the Career Development Award**. First, researchers are invited to submit a short letter of intent. The most convincing project ideas will be selected, and the main applicant will be invited to submit a full proposal. All documents must be submitted by the main applicant using the provided **template** and must be completed in English. Proposals that have already been rejected can only be submitted one more time. A detailed explanation of the changes compared to the previous proposal is required.

1st Step: Letter of Intent

In a first stage, researchers are invited to submit a **letter of intent** that includes a **short project outline**. The **template** for the letter of intent for the Career Development Award is provided on the [Synopsis Foundation website](#). The letter of intent includes:

- Information on the main applicant
- Project title
- Start date and duration of the project
- Requested funding
- Outline of the proposed research project (1 page only)
- Information regarding resubmission and further funding partners

**The letter of intent must be submitted online in pdf-format via the [submission tool](#).
The submission deadline is 5 May 2024 at 11:59 p.m.**

The Scientific Advisory Board of Synopsis Foundation will review the letters of intent and select the most promising project ideas based on research quality, originality and relevance to the call.

2nd Step: Full Proposal

If the preliminary review of the project outline was positive, the main applicant will be invited to submit a **detailed full proposal**. The **template** for the full proposal will be **sent** to the main applicant **via e-mail**, together with the invitation.

The full proposal includes:

- Scientific abstract
- Introduction to the topic
- Specific goals of the project and detailed research plan for phase 1
- Detailed budget for phase 1
- Disclosure of all other funding sources
- Curriculum vitae, incl. a list of top 5 papers
- Short description of career plans of the applicant for the next five years, incl. a short outline for phase 2
- Letter of support and commitment from the supervisor/principal investigator, stating that the PostDoc will be working independently on the proposed project

All relevant information must be compiled in a single pdf-file of maximum 10 MB and must be submitted online. The link to the submission tool will be provided via e-mail.

Submission deadline is 10 July 2024 at 11:59 p.m.

EVALUATION

Full proposals will be evaluated by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Synopsis Foundation, supported by external reviewers. The central **criteria for evaluation** are **originality, innovation, scientific quality, feasibility, experience and past performance of the main applicant**, as well as **relevance to the call**. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Final decision for funding lies with the Board of Trustees of the Synopsis Foundation.

Funding decisions will be announced before 20 December 2024.



DETAILS ON THE FUNDING SCHEME

The maximum funding period for phase 1 and phase 2 combined is four years: For example, two years PostDoc and two years faculty support; or one year PostDoc (phase 1) and three years faculty support (phase 2).

Phase 1 – Postdoctoral Research Phase

Advanced postdoctoral scientists conducting research in a host laboratory at a public research facility in Switzerland are supported for up to two years with a maximum of CHF 100'000 per year. Applicants should have worked 3-5 years as postdoctoral researchers at the time of application. After the completion of year 1, awardees must submit a progress report.

Phase 2 – Junior Faculty Phase

To apply for phase 2 of the fellowship, applicants must submit a progress report, research plan and a career plan at least 3 months before the completion of phase 1. Applicants qualifying for phase 2 of the award will be invited for an interview with members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Foundation. The funding for phase 2 is up to CHF 100'000 per year.

Eligibility criteria for phase 2 of the Career Fellowship:

- Approval of the progress report and research plan by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Synopsis Foundation
- Move to a new institution or department
- Employment as an **independent** faculty member (assistant professor or higher level) or group leader
- Funding for faculty/group leader position must be provided by institutional funds or other grants (e.g. ERC starter grant or SNSF-professorship)
- The independent position can be at any institution in EMBO member countries
- In case a candidate requires additional time to secure an independent faculty position after completion of the PostDoc phase, the start date of the independent phase can be postponed by up to one year (this is contingent on the approval of the progress report, incl. career plan, from phase one)

CONTACT

If you have questions regarding any aspects of the Call for Proposals 2024, please consult our [FAQs](#) or contact Heide Hess, Liaison Officer Research: hess@demenz-forschung.ch, +41 44 276 40 63.

