

# Regulatory guidelines concerning the “Doc.Mobility” scholarships for PhD candidates

*Note: The English translation of this document is provided for informational purposes; only the French document shall prevail*

## Preamble

The Doc.Mobility program is a program funded by the Swiss universities and co-funded by swissuniversities until 2024, which grants mobility scholarships to PhD students who are not funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). By contributing to their living expenses at a foreign academic institution, this scholarship offers them the opportunity to expand their scientific network at an international level, deepen their scientific knowledge, and enhance their doctoral experience.

The selection process and administration are handled by the respective university.

## Article 1 – Purpose

1. This regulation specifies the conditions and procedure for awarding the Doc.Mobility scholarships from the University of Geneva (UNIGE) and, during the duration of the partnership, from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) (hereafter, termed the *scholarship*).
2. This scholarship contributes to the living expenses of UNIGE or IHEID PhD students not funded by the SNSF during their doctoral studies in a foreign academic institution in order to advance their doctoral work.
3. The scholarship is defined as a lump sum based on scales determined by UNIGE’s Research Committee (hereafter, termed *COREC*) and listed on the Doc.Mobility website to cover personal upkeep of the awardee throughout the duration of their mobility.
4. The selection and awarding procedure of the scholarship is entrusted to the COREC. This procedure has been established in accordance with the COREC’s organizational regulations and complies with these regulatory guidelines.

## Article 2 – Duration of the scholarship

1. The scholarship is granted for a mobility period of six months. A scholarship for a longer period (but not exceeding 12 months) may be exceptionally granted to UNIGE PhD students upon written and justified request attached to the application.

2. The research stay begins no earlier than two months following the COREC's decision and no later than 12 months following that date. The scholarship is disbursed by the COREC secretary no earlier than the month preceding the first day of the stay abroad.
3. In the event of unforeseeable circumstances or for medical reasons, the awardee may contact the COREC office in writing to request a modification to the start date of the stay, while providing justifying documents.
4. The scholarship cannot be awarded retroactively.

### Article 3 – Personal conditions

1. PhD candidates enrolled at UNIGE or IHEID are eligible to submit a scholarship application, regardless of the discipline, if they meet the following conditions. The applicant:
  - a. Has been enrolled for at least two semesters at the time of the application deadline, unless duly justified and supported by the thesis supervisor.
  - b. Is not funded by the SNSF.
  - c. Holds either the Swiss nationality, a valid residence or living permit in Switzerland, or the cross-borders commuters permit.
  - d. Confirms in writing their intention to continue their doctoral studies at UNIGE or IHEID following completion of the mobility period and to obtain their doctoral degree there.
  - e. Presents a project for the mobility stay in a host institution abroad related to their doctoral research and consistent with their research project. This institution must be recognized by UNIGE or considered as a high-quality research institution by the PhD student's thesis supervisor or a member of their Thesis Advisory Committee in their letter of support.
  - f. For UNIGE PhD students, the stay must end no later than six months before the scheduled thesis defense date. An exemption may be granted upon written and justified request attached to the application.
  - g. Has obtained their last master's degree no more than 10 years prior to the application deadline. An exemption may be granted upon written and justified request.
2. Admitted applicants remain enrolled at UNIGE or IHEID throughout the mobility period for which the scholarship has been granted.
3. For PhD candidates employed by UNIGE during their mobility period, the scholarship awarded by the COREC takes the form of an additional subsidy for living expenses.
4. The scholarship can only be obtained once.
5. Co-supervised PhD candidates may apply for a Doc.Mobility scholarship. However, the mobility period cannot take place at the co-supervisor's institution.

### Article 4 – Foreign research institution

The scholarship funds a research stay at a host institution abroad. The applicant is generally not allowed to carry out the mobility within the university where they completed their master's degree or an equivalent, nor within a research group where they

completed a master's internship. An exception may be granted based on a written and justified request attached to the application.

#### Article 5 – Submission guidelines

1. The application submission deadline is determined by the COREC every year and is published on the Doc.Mobility website during the spring semester. The call for applications may include provisions that complement these regulations.
2. Applications must be submitted by UNIGE or IHEID PhD candidates no later than the submission deadline indicated on the Doc.Mobility website. They may be written in English or French.
3. The COREC may require the use of an established form for application submissions.
4. Applications must be complete, follow the format indicated in the call for applications, and include the documents specified in the guidelines posted on the Doc.Mobility website at the time of the call for applications.
5. Applicants are responsible for accuracy and truthfulness of the information contained in the documents they submit. In the case of non-compliance with this rule, the COREC has the right to refuse, suspend, and/or revoke the scholarship. COREC may request additional information and documents from applicants that are deemed useful to evaluate the application.
6. Applicants must comply with the legal and ethical provisions in effect at the host institution, as well as those at the University of Geneva or IHEID. Applicants must obtain any required authorization or declaration related to their research project.

#### Article 6 – Non-consideration

1. The COREC does not consider applications that are incomplete, do not meet the formal requirements, or are submitted outside the prescribed deadlines.
2. In case an applicant is not considered for the scholarship, they can apply a second time at most for a Doc.Mobility scholarship.

#### Article 7 – Application evaluation criteria

1. Applications admitted for submission to the COREC are evaluated based on three aspects that together define the added value of the research mobility period: the quality of the scientific project, applicant motivation, and the quality of the host institution, including its relevance to the project.
2. The evaluation criteria for the quality of the scientific project are as follows:
  - Quality, originality, precision, relevance, and timeliness of the research project to be carried out during the mobility period.
  - Scientific achievements of the applicants at the time of submission.
  - Prospects of achieving the intended training objective.
3. Applicant motivation is assessed based on their ability to:
  - Develop an independent research project in a novel environment.
  - Demonstrate genuine prospects of completing their PhD following scholarship completion.

- Engage in a scientific, academic, or non-academic career.
- 4. The scientific host institution must be recognized for its added value to the research project, including the quality of the research conditions it offers, notably research facilities, supervision opportunities, and training possibilities.

#### **Article 8 – Evaluation procedure for UNIGE applicants**

1. The COREC appoints two rapporteurs from its members who individually review each application. If necessary, these rapporteurs may request additional information for evaluation purposes.
2. If necessary, the COREC may seek input from external experts.
3. At least one of the rapporteurs conducts an individual interview with the applicant, lasting a maximum of 30 minutes, prior to the plenary session. The purpose of the interview is to evaluate the applicant's motivation, project proficiency, and the contribution of the host institution.
4. The rapporteurs submit a written recommendation to the COREC justifying their acceptance for grant, conditional acceptance, or refusal at least 8 days before the plenary meeting.
5. During the plenary session, the rapporteurs present their recommendations to the COREC for each applicant.
6. The COREC establishes a ranking of the UNIGE and IHEID applications submitted to the same deadline based on the criteria listed in Article 7.
7. The COREC makes decisions regarding the acceptance, conditional acceptance, or applicant refusal.
8. The COREC is free to determine the number of scholarships awarded each year, taking into account the quality of the submitted applications and the available financial resources.
9. The COREC communicates its decision to the applicants in writing.
10. In case an application is refused, PhD candidates can apply a second time at most for a Doc.Mobility scholarship.

#### **Article 9 – Evaluation procedure for IHEID applicants**

1. The IHEID establishes an internal committee for applicant pre-selection to be submitted to COREC. This committee consists of one representative from each of the five departments of the IHEID.
2. If necessary, the members of the internal committee may request additional information for evaluation purposes, seek input from external experts, or conduct an individual interview with the applicant, lasting a maximum of 30 minutes, to evaluate their motivation, project proficiency, and the contribution of the host institution.
3. The members of COREC representing IHEID submit a written recommendation to the COREC justifying their acceptance for grant, conditional acceptance, or refusal at least 8 days before the plenary meeting.
4. During the plenary session, the members of the COREC representing IHEID present their recommendations to the COREC for each applicant.
5. The COREC establishes a ranking of the UNIGE and IHEID applications submitted to the same deadline based on the criteria listed in Article 7.

6. The COREC makes decisions regarding the acceptance, conditional acceptance, or refusal of the UNIGE and IHEID applicants.
7. The COREC is free to determine the number of scholarships awarded each year, taking into account the quality of the submitted applications and the available financial resources.
8. The COREC communicates its decision to the applicants in writing.

#### **Article 10 – Additional contributions**

1. In addition to the scholarship intended to contribute for personal upkeep, UNIGE or IHEID provides candidates with a lump sum travel allowance.
2. The COREC periodically sets the amount of the travel allowance based on geographic zones. This information is published on the Doc.Mobility website.
3. For candidates who have one or more young children (under 6 years old during the mobility period) under their care during the mobility stay, UNIGE or IHEID additionally provides a fixed allowance determined by COREC for the duration of the stay.
4. A supportive allowance is provided to PhD candidates with disabilities. The amount is determined on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Article 11 – Financial restrictions**

1. In their request, applicants must indicate any financial contributions they receive from other organizations or institutions in the context of their PhD thesis.
2. Once the grant is awarded, awardees must inform the COREC of any financial contributions they receive from other organizations or institutions in the context of their PhD thesis or mobility period.

#### **Article 12 – Grant disbursement**

1. The grant is paid in Swiss Francs to a bank or postal account in Switzerland.
2. The grant paid in Swiss Francs is not adjusted to the exchange rate.

#### **Article 13 – Obligations of PhD candidates**

1. PhD candidates are responsible for all arrangements concerning the mobility period (residence permit, accommodation, transportation, etc.).
2. All other expenses not covered by the grant provided by UNIGE or IHEID are assumed by the PhD candidate, particularly insurance costs.

#### **Article 14 – Reports**

1. Upon their return from the mobility period, UNIGE-affiliated awardees must present a scientific presentation to their thesis supervisor and submit a report to the COREC within six weeks after the return date. The two rapporteurs of the COREC review its content, provide an evaluation to the COREC. Once the report is approved by the COREC in a plenary session, the evaluation is communicated to the grant recipient.

2. Upon their return from the mobility period, IHEID-affiliated awardees must have their thesis supervisor submit a report to the two members of the COREC representing IHEID regarding the progress made by the PhD candidate during their mobility period. The two members of the COREC representing IHEID review its content, provide an evaluation to the COREC. Once the report is approved by the COREC, the evaluation is transmitted to the grant recipient.

#### **Article 15 – Modifications to information and documents**

1. Once the grant is awarded, any modification to the information or documents that formed the basis of the grant, or any change in circumstances (mobility cancellation or abandonment, research interruption, etc.) must be communicated to the COREC as soon as possible, and particularly, modifications to the research work or the place of stay.
2. Modifications to the research work or place of stay must be approved by the COREC office. Otherwise, the grant may be suspended, revoked, or terminated in accordance with the following article.

#### **Article 16 – Scholarship suspension, revocation, and termination**

1. The right to receive the awarded grant may be suspended, revoked, or terminated by the COREC for valid reasons, including cancellation or premature interruption of the mobility period, renouncement by the applicant, provision of inaccurate information or falsified documents in the application, or if the personal conditions that led to the grant are no longer met.
2. In such cases, recipients must reimburse UNIGE or IHEID for the amounts paid proportionally to the remaining time, and/or any unused funding in the case of a complete cancellation of the mobility period.

#### **Article 17 – Other applicable provisions**

In case of non-compliance with this regulation or any other provisions applicable to the PhD candidate at UNIGE, IHEID, or their host institution, the UNIGE or IHEID may take all necessary measures or sanctions against the PhD candidate in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

#### **Article 18 – Application of regulation to the IHEID**

1. This regulation is only applicable to PhD candidates at IHEID during the transitional period of co-funding by swissuniversities and the higher education institutions to which the PhD candidates are affiliated.
2. During this period, the minimum number of PhD candidate awardees from IHEID is 3 grants, and the maximum number is 5 grants per year.

#### **Article 19 – Appeals**

1. Any decision regarding mobility grants made by the COREC may be contested within a period of 30 days starting from the date of notification of the decision in question.
2. The conditions and procedures for such appeals are governed by the applicable regulations.

## Article 20 – Guideline adoption and entry into force

The present regulation replaces the regulation of July 5, 2021. It was approved by the Rectorate of the University of Geneva and IHEID management on June 5 and May 19, 2023, respectively. It comes into effect as of June 12, 2023.