

ThinkSwiss Research Scholarships 2026

ThinkSwiss is a scholarship program funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). It is managed by the Office of Science, Technology and Higher Education at the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, D.C. and supported by the Embassy of Switzerland in Ottawa, Canada. The aim of the program is to promote research opportunities in Switzerland for students at U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities and to foster exchange between Swiss, U.S., and Canadian universities and research institutions.

Eligibility Criteria

To apply for a ThinkSwiss Scholarship, you must:

- currently be enrolled at an accredited U.S. or Canadian university/college,
- be a graduate student or an undergraduate student who will have completed their sophomore year by the time the research stay in Switzerland begins, and
- provide a written confirmation from a professor at a Swiss university that they will accept you for a research stay in their group.

Please note that:

- Postdoctoral candidates are **not** eligible to apply.
- We specifically encourage U.S. and Canadian applicants interested in Climate Innovation, Space, Robotics, Quantum, Biosciences & Bioengineering to apply.
- Students applying to ETH Zurich must meet the prerequisites to become a "Project Mobility" student as stipulated by the university. Read more below.

Application Procedure

The application and all supporting documents must be uploaded on the [online application form](#) in PDF format by **31 January 2026, 23:59 EST**. In order to be considered for this scholarship, each application must contain the following:

1. The completed application [online form](#)
2. A research project outline (e.g. an overview of the tasks and milestones of your project that you agreed on with your host professor, max. 2 pages single-spaced, and keep in mind, your audience are educated readers but not necessarily experts in your field)
3. A letter of motivation/explanation of why you should be awarded the ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship, why you would make an excellent "student ambassador" in the future, and why you choose Switzerland as your research destination (please keep this within 2 pages)
4. A CV (no more than two pages)
5. A copy of your current university transcripts and diplomas (if applicable)
6. A letter of acceptance from the host professor and/or hosting institution in Switzerland (we expect this letter to highlight the relevance of your research)
7. Recommendation letter from a professor at the university you are enrolled in. **The submission link for your letter will be sent automatically to the provided email address of your home professor once you submit the online application form.**

For further questions please contact washington.science@eda.admin.ch.

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Note: 31 January 2026, is the final deadline. We cannot review applications submitted after the deadline. All supporting documents must be uploaded in one PDF. After you have successfully submitted your application, you will receive an automated email response confirming your submission. In any case, please send us an email to washington.science@eda.admin.ch to inform us about your submission. Please allow us a couple of days to contact you personally after your submission. If you do not receive a personal email from this office within one week after your submission, please get in touch with us.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Are students who are not citizens of the United States or Canada eligible to apply for the program?

Students currently enrolled at an accredited college or university in the United States and Canada are eligible to apply. However, participation will also depend on the ability to obtain a visa, if required.

2) Can the scholarship also be applied to projects at public research institutions or private higher education institutions?

The scholarship supports research at [public universities](#) and [public research institutions](#). However, we do not support research stays at private higher education or research institutions.

3) How do I find a host institution and/or a professor in Switzerland?

Finding a professor in Switzerland is part of the due diligence process that the applicant must conduct on his/her own.

4) How do I contact a host institute and professor?

- Think about the field in which you wish to deepen your research and look for prospective supervising professors who work in that field.
- Write to them (on LinkedIn or via email) and enquire if they'd be interested in taking you on in their cohort. It can take several weeks to find your host professor, so we recommend starting as early as possible and writing to as many relevant professors as possible.
- Ideally, your (short) email to them should include:
 - Details about why you would like to work with them and what about their work interests you.
 - Details about your skills and competencies that are relevant to the work in your chosen field.
 - Details about your past experiences and how they are relevant to your current research interest.
 - Details about how you plan to contribute to and elevate their research.
 - Details about why you would make a good fit.
 - Your CV and a proposal/short summary (250-300 words) of the research you would like to undertake under their supervision.
- Applicants are responsible for finding a host professor at a Swiss university as well as for clarifying the scope of a research project before submitting their applications for the ThinkSwiss Scholarships.
- If you are struggling to identify appropriate professors, reach out to faculty at the university you are currently enrolled in and enquire if they could recommend suitable professors for you. Where possible, request your faculty members to introduce you to prospective professors.

Please refer to [this video](#) for further guidance.

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5) Are there any language requirements?

In Switzerland, undergraduate courses are usually taught in the respective region's national language (German, French or Italian) and graduate programs are often offered in English. However, for a research stay in Switzerland, foreign language skills are not required, as the working language will generally be English. Knowledge of any Swiss national language would of course be helpful for daily life.

6) Do I need the acceptance letter from the professor in a specific format?

Please request a confirmation letter on the university/institute letterhead from the host professor. Upload the PDF version of the same with your application. Please also ask your host professor to mention the exact duration of your research stay in Switzerland on your acceptance letter. A copy of the email is not sufficient proof of acceptance.

7) I have been accepted by two host institutions. Can I submit two applications for the scholarship?

No, please choose the host institution that you truly wish to attend and the research topic you find most interesting. If you submit multiple applications, only the first one will be considered, and any additional submissions will not be evaluated.

8) If I get an acceptance letter from a host professor, does it ensure my selection for the scholarship?

Receiving an acceptance letter from the host institution professor is an application criterion, not a selection criterion.

9) Is the scholarship restricted to students whose focus is STEM research?

The ThinkSwiss Scholarship is open to students from all fields. However, we specifically encourage U.S. applicants interested in Climate Innovation, Space, Robotics, Quantum, Biosciences & Bioengineering to apply.

10) Can I submit more than one recommendation letter?

No, please submit only one recommendation letter, whichever you think is the most compelling.

11) Are copies okay?

Yes, copies of letters of recommendation, transcripts, passports and diplomas can be scanned and sent to us directly. Alternatively, the academic institution can send the documents to us directly.

12) I have been accepted by a Swiss host university, but the research stay is for a duration less than 2 months. Can I still apply?

No, your application will not be considered since the minimum duration of the research stay is 2 months, and the maximum is up to 3 months.

13) My research project is longer than 3 months; will the scholarship duration be extended?

ThinkSwiss Scholarships cover a maximum duration of three months. We cannot extend the length of scholarship support. Students are free to organize additional funding from other sources for longer research stay.

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14) Can I combine this scholarship with another work or scholarship opportunity in Switzerland?

No, we expect your ThinkSwiss research to be the primary focus of your stay. However, we allow additional funding next to ThinkSwiss, as long as the process of acquiring additional funds does not delay the timeframe of your stay.

15) I am in my final year of studies, am I still eligible to apply for the ThinkSwiss Scholarship?

You are eligible to apply as long as you complete your research in Switzerland by the time you graduate from your home university i.e. you must be enrolled at your home university until the completion of your research stay in Switzerland.

16) Does the scholarship provide accommodation and meals for students?

No, the ThinkSwiss scholarship is a lump sum to support students during their research stay. Accommodation, meals and travel arrangements have to be organized and funded by awardees themselves.

ThinkSwiss Regulations

Notification to awardees

All ThinkSwiss Scholarship winners will be notified by email by **28 February 2026, 21:00 EST** and must accept this scholarship by **15 March 2026**.

Timeframe of your stay

The applicant is free to schedule their research stay anytime between **1 May 2026** and **1 December 2026**, with a start date of their research stay no later than 1 December 2026. Most students choose to go abroad during the summer months as this period falls between regular university semesters. Please be aware that in Switzerland the semester break is approximately from June to mid-September and that during this time universities are less busy.

Payment of the scholarship

The ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship provides a prorated amount based on the length of your stay (a maximum of up to three months). The students will get a stipend of **60 CHF/day** from the start to the last day in the University, +3 days for arrival and departure up to a maximum of 90 days (5,400 CHF maximum).

Please note that this amount covers only a portion of the average student's living expenses and that you will be asked to prove sufficient financial means to the Swiss cantonal authorities before a visa can be issued (see information on visa below). The whole amount of the scholarship money will be transferred to the bank account of the recipient shortly before the departure date.

Additional funding

Please note that research stays at Swiss host institutions are usually unpaid. Since ThinkSwiss does not cover all expenses (see above), we permit additional funding as long as the process of acquiring additional funds *does not delay* the timeframe of your stay.

Obligations as a ThinkSwiss Awardee

By accepting this scholarship, you agree to write a testimonial shortly after your return to the United States or Canada to share your experiences during your research stay in Switzerland. You also agree to carry out at least one activity as a "student ambassador" to promote Swiss research after your return.

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Obtaining admission to the Host University

Please note that obtaining the scholarship does not mean that the student has acquired a specific status (all students enrolled in Swiss universities are assigned a 'status' that informs the level of access they get within the university) and that the awardees must comply with the host university's policies regarding admission. Each recipient is in charge of contacting the international office of your host university in Switzerland to finalize your registration and learn more about the specifics of your status at the host institution. Please coordinate and stay in touch with your host professor.

Key points to consider while reaching out to a host professor/supervisor:

1. **Self-Initiated Matching:** The ThinkSwiss program uses a bottom-up approach, meaning you are responsible for identifying and approaching potential supervisors independently. The program does not offer specific support to help you find a match.
2. **Evaluation and Endorsement:** Your potential supervisor will assess your academic qualifications and must endorse your research proposal. This endorsement is a crucial part of your application.
3. **Financial Responsibility:** As a ThinkSwiss awardee, you are financially responsible for your research stay. The host institution does not bear any financial responsibility, and you are expected to conduct your research using the ThinkSwiss scholarship stipend.
4. **Agreement and Support Letter:** You must reach an agreement with your potential supervisor. A formal letter from your supervisor stating their willingness to support your research project is mandatory. Without this letter, your application will be incomplete and rejected.
5. **Voluntary Decision:** Supervisors participate voluntarily. They are not obligated to support your application, so approach them respectfully and make a compelling case for your research proposal.
6. **Importance of Support Letter:** A well-prepared acceptance letter from your host supervisor can significantly influence the success of your scholarship application. Ensure you communicate the importance of this letter and provide any needed guidance to help them draft it effectively.

Responsibilities of the academic supervisor:

If you have found someone who has agreed to act as your supervisor, they are expected to:

- Supervise you during their research stay in Switzerland (up to 90 days).
- Integrate you into their team, ensuring you have access to necessary resources such as lab space and infrastructure.
- Support you in attaining an appropriate academic status (e.g., visiting researcher) at your institution.

Applications to ETH Zürich:

Scholars applying to ETH Zurich, kindly check the prerequisites beforehand:

- To be eligible for the ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship, applicants **must** apply to the "[Project Mobility Students](#)" program at ETH Zurich. This involves a separate application process directly with the university, meaning you need to complete both application processes independently.
- Applications to ETH Zurich must be submitted *at least two months* before the planned start date of the project. If a visa is required, the application must be submitted *at least three months* before the desired start date. Please ensure these deadlines are taken into account when planning your project. Additionally, it is your responsibility to check and meet the visa/entry requirements for Switzerland.
- Kindly note that acceptance into ETH Zurich's Project Mobility Student program does not guarantee selection as a ThinkSwiss Scholarship recipient.

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Multiple applications

If you are granted a ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship, you **cannot** apply a second time. However, if your first application was not successful, you are allowed to apply again.

Writing Guidelines

When writing your project overview and letter of motivation for the ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship, consider the following guiding questions to help you craft a strong and focused narrative. The project overview and letter of motivation should each be a maximum of 2 pages (approximately 700-800 words), using standard margins and a 12-point font size.

Research Project Overview

- Briefly describe your intended research project, including its main objectives, the tasks you will undertake and the milestones you will use to measure progress.
- What new skills or knowledge do you hope to develop through this research project?

Letter of Motivation

- Why do you deserve the ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship? Tell us how this aligns with your career goals, and how your past experiences and skills will contribute to your project's success.
- Uniqueness and impact of your research project. Tell us how your specific field of research has the potential to bring more societal, environment or economic value.
- Why do you want to conduct research in Switzerland? Why with your host institution in particular? Are there any existing collaborations with your home institution, could your research stay create new opportunities for collaboration?
- Explain why you would make an excellent "Swiss student ambassador" when you come back to the U.S./Canada.

Answering these questions thoroughly and thoughtfully will help you create a compelling research project overview and letter of motivation that highlights both your research proposal and your personal qualifications.

General Information

If you are approved for a ThinkSwiss Scholarship, please check with the international department of the host university and inquire about registering with and accepting guidance from them in regard to student services available, housing possibilities and other amenities that may be offered by the host universities.

Visa

Concerning visas to Switzerland, please inquire through the Swiss Consulate Generals/Embassy about the necessary visa, depending on where you live in the United States or Canada. This office cannot influence the visa process. All other citizens must also check the visa requirements for their countries of citizenship. This can be done by checking with the Schengen Visa Information and if necessary, applying for a visa.

Please note: The conditions for your visa approval are determined by the canton (state) in which your research institution is located. In the process of granting your visa, the respective cantonal authorities will ask you to prove that you have sufficient financial means to sustain yourself during the time of your stay, and each of them varies in its regulations. The ThinkSwiss Scholarship (1800CHF/month) is generally not accepted as sufficient proof, because the amount of money deemed sufficient varies between 1500-2200CHF/month depending on the canton.

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Housing

Students are responsible for their own housing, but a good place to start is contacting the international or housing office of the host university for recommendations.

Insurance

Please note that the scholarship does not provide health, accident or liability insurance. Applicants must make sure that they have insurance coverage for their stay in Switzerland, and it is the sole responsibility of the student to obtain this coverage.

Transportation

It is highly recommended that you use the convenient public transportation in Switzerland that takes you almost everywhere. If you plan to travel around Switzerland, it might make sense to buy a [half-fare travel card](#). Please check with a salesperson at one of the [SBB counters](#) that you can find in most of the bigger train stations in Switzerland.

Thank you for your interest in ThinkSwiss!