

# ThinkSwiss Research Scholarships 2025

The ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship program Asia-Pacific is funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and is supported by Swissnex in India and the Embassies of Switzerland in Australia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam. The programme aims to promote research opportunities in Switzerland for Indian, Australian, Singaporean and Bruneian students to foster the exchange between Swiss and Asia-Pacific universities & institutions.

## Eligibility Criteria

To apply for a ThinkSwiss Scholarship, you must:

- Currently be enrolled at an accredited Indian, Australian, Singaporean or Bruneian university/institute.
- Be a Master's degree student or a Bachelor's degree student who has completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> year by the time the research stay in Switzerland begins.
- Provide written confirmation from a professor at a Swiss university or research institute mentioning they have accepted you for a research stay in their group/lab.

Please note that:

- Doctoral and postdoctoral candidates are **not** eligible to apply.
- We specifically encourage Indian applicants with an interest in Antimicrobial Research (AMR), One Health, biodiversity or climate change and action to apply. (The University of Lausanne is not part of this programme for Indian students.) We are subject-agnostic as far as Australian, Singaporean and Bruneian applicants are concerned.
- 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 2025, 23:59**. In order to be considered for this scholarship, each application must contain the following:

1. A cover letter (maximum of two pages; see details below for writing guidelines)
2. A CV (maximum two pages)
3. A copy of your current university transcripts (we accept photocopies of official transcripts issued to the student)
4. A letter of acceptance from the professor and/or host institution in Switzerland. Please request a confirmation letter on the university/institute letterhead from the host professor.
5. A letter of recommendation from a current professor who can attest to the applicant's abilities. (Should your professor wish to submit the recommendation letter directly, please share [this link](#) with them).

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1) Are non-Indian, non-Australian, non-Singaporean or non-Bruneian citizens eligible to apply for the programme?**

All enrolled students at accredited Indian, Australian, Singaporean and Bruneian universities are eligible, but the ability to participate will depend on obtaining a visa, if necessary.

**2) 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. For a comprehensive list of universities, please click on [this](#) link.

**3) 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 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.

**4) Are there any language requirements?**

Foreign language skills are not required for a research stay in Switzerland, as the working language will generally be English. Knowledge of any Swiss national language would, of course, be helpful for daily life.

**5) 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.

**6) 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.

**7) If I get a host letter from a 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.

**8) 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. We do **not** support research stays at private higher education or research institutions.

**9) Can I submit more than one recommendation letter?**

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

**10) Are past projects, CGPA or publications part of the evaluation criteria?**

Yes, the above points are part of the evaluation and your CV and transcripts should reflect the same.

**11) I have been accepted by a Swiss host university but the research stint 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 stint is 2 months, and the maximum is up to 3 months.

**12) 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 organise additional funding from other sources for a longer research stay.

**13) 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.

## ThinkSwiss Regulations

### **Notification to awardees**

All ThinkSwiss Scholarship winners will be notified by email by **28 February 2025, 21:00** and must accept this scholarship by **15 March 2025**.

### **Timeframe of your stay**

The applicant is free to schedule research anytime between **1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025**. The start date of your research internship *cannot* be later than **1 November 2025**. 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, +2 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 full amount of the scholarship money will be transferred to the recipient's bank account within 10 business days after their arrival in Switzerland.

### **Additional funding**

Please note that research internships 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**

As a ThinkSwiss ambassador, you are not only advocating for the programme, but also for Switzerland as a premier study destination.

To help us highlight Switzerland effectively, we ask that you document your journey thoroughly. Please capture videos, pictures and written content (in order of preference) to vividly portray your experiences and insights.

Sharing this content on your social media will help us reach a broader audience and inspire others to consider Switzerland for their studies. We will provide you with some guidelines based on our needs to assist you in crafting your story and messaging.

### **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 finalise 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.

### 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](#)" programme 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 programme does not guarantee selection as a ThinkSwiss Scholarship recipient.

### 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 - Cover Letter

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

#### Page 1: 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?
- How relevant is the proposed host institution for your research? Are there any existing collaborations with your home institution, and how will this strengthen them? If there are no current collaborations, discuss how your research could create new opportunities for collaboration.

#### Page 2: Personal Motivation and Qualifications

- Why do you deserve the ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship? Tell us why you're interested in your research area, how this aligns with your career goals, and how your past experiences and skills will contribute to your project's success.
- Describe a time when you faced a new challenge or unfamiliar task in your academic or research work. How did you approach it, and what did you learn? How do you plan to apply these lessons to your ThinkSwiss research project?
- Explain how you would effectively represent the ThinkSwiss programme as an ambassador.

Answering these questions thoroughly and thoughtfully will help you create a compelling cover letter 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**

Applicants should verify visa requirements based on their nationality. Indian nationals require a visa to enter Switzerland. We recommend Indian applicants apply for a 'Students for up to 90 days' or a 'Tourist Visa' for research visits of up to 90 days, and a 'Student for more than 90 days' visa for ETH Zurich. Concerning visas to Switzerland, please follow the process mentioned on the Swiss Embassy website ([VES Global for India](#)) for the necessary visa and apply with sufficient time in hand. **We cannot influence the visa process.**

Please note: The conditions for your visa approval are determined by the Canton (state) in which your research institution is placed. 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. Being awarded the ThinkSwiss Scholarship (1,600 CHF/month) is generally not accepted as sufficient proof because the amount of money deemed sufficient varies between 1,500 to 2,200 CHF/month, depending on the Canton.

### **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 generally makes sense to buy a [half-fare travel card](#). If you are younger than 25, you can also consider the [GA travel card](#). Usually, you need to purchase these cards for a period of one year, but often you can resell them and get a part of your money back. 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!