

ThinkSwiss Research Scholarships 2016

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

Eligibility Requirements

To apply for a ThinkSwiss Scholarship you must:

- Currently be enrolled at an accredited US or Canadian university/college
- Be a graduate student or an undergraduate student who will have completed the sophomore year by the time the research stay in Switzerland begins
- Provide a written confirmation from a professor at a Swiss university that he/she will accept you for a research stay in his/her group

Application

The application and all supporting documents must be sent in PDF format to was.science@eda.admin.ch by **January 31, 2016**. In order to be considered for this scholarship, each application must contain:

1. An introduction page with:
 - your first name and last name as it appears on your travel documents
 - the accredited university in the U.S. or in Canada at which you are currently enrolled
 - the name of your host university in Switzerland, including the involved institute and the name of your host professor
 - the dates and the length of stay, at least two, but up to three months in total
 - your field of research
 - your e-mail address (one that is valid for a longer period of time and that you check on a regular basis!)
2. A cover letter outlining your research project (e.g. an overview of the tasks and milestones of your project that you agreed on with your host professor) and explaining why you should be awarded the ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship and why you would make an excellent “student ambassador” in the future
3. A CV (no more than two pages)
4. A copy of your current university transcripts (we accept photocopies of official transcripts issued to the student)
5. A letter of acceptance from the professor and/or hosting institution in Switzerland
6. A letter of recommendation from a current professor who can attest to the applicant’s abilities

The last three requirements (points 4-6) indicated above can be sent separately to was.science@eda.admin.ch by universities and references themselves. However, all requested documents (points 1-6) must be sent by **January 31, 2016** which is the final deadline for the completion of the application process.

ThinkSwiss Regulations

Payment of the scholarship

The ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship provides a prorated amount according to the length of your stay: a monthly scholarship of CHF 1,050 (approx. USD 1,050) for a period of two to three months (CHF 3,150 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). All ThinkSwiss scholarship winners will be notified by February 29, 2016 and must accept this scholarship by March 15, 2016. The whole amount of the scholarship money will be transferred to the bank account of the recipient shortly before the departure date.

Timeframe of your stay

The applicant is free to schedule research anytime between May 1, 2016 and December 1, 2016, with a starting date of your research internship no later than December 1, 2016. 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.

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 next to ThinkSwiss, 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 participate in our Brainstorm Blog with at least one blog post to share your experiences during your research stay in Switzerland. After your return to the U.S. or Canada respectively, you also agree to carry out at least one activity as a "student ambassador" to promote Swiss research.

Obtaining admission to the Host University

Please note that obtaining the scholarship does not mean that the student has acquired a specific status 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 his/her host university in Switzerland to finalize his/her registration and learning more about the specifics of status at the host institution. Please coordinate and stay in touch with your host professor.

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. Similarly, if you have received a ThinkSwiss summer school travel grants, you are not eligible for a ThinkSwiss research scholarship.

Limitation of the number of ThinkSwiss awardees coming from the same university

In order to ensure diversity among our ThinkSwiss awardees, the number of available research scholarships is limited to a maximum of three spots for each university that is represented by three or more applicants. However, the number of applications per university is not limited.

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 from 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 either 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 and this can be done by checking with the [Schengen Visa Information](#) and if necessary, apply for a visa.

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. The ThinkSwiss Scholarship (1050CHF/month) is generally not accepted as sufficient proof, because the amount of money deemed sufficient varies between 1500-2200CHF/month depending on the Canton.

Housing

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

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 public transportation in Switzerland since there is a very convenient public transportation system that takes you almost everywhere: you should definitely experiment with it! If you plan to travel around in Switzerland, it generally makes sense to buy a half-fare travel card. If you are younger than 25 you might also consider the Track7 travel card. Usually you need to purchase these cards for a period of one year, but often you can resell it 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are non-U.S. or non-Canadian citizens eligible to apply for the program?

All enrolled students at accredited U.S. or Canadian universities are eligible, but ability to participate will depend on obtaining a visa, if necessary.

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.

How do I find a hosting 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. You can find some helpful links on our website thinkswiss.tumblr.com/SwissHigherEducation.

This program is only open to students who have completed their sophomore year by the beginning of their research stay in Switzerland. What are my options as a freshman?

Besides the research scholarships, we also offer travel grants to summer schools in Switzerland for which freshmen may also be eligible. Please have a look on the ThinkSwiss summer schools section at thinkswiss.tumblr.com/About.

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.

Thank you for your interest in ThinkSwiss!

