



Call for Proposals: DIZH Fellowships

Third Call, Summer 2021

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1 Quick Checklist for Successful Applications

General remarks

- The deadline for applications, including the letter of recommendation from your direct supervisor, is June 11th at 23:39. The application will be rejected if formal requirements, such as deadlines, length, budget, or other submission requirements are not met.
- After the deadline, the respective department heads will approve/veto each application. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you inform your line about your application *beforehand*.
- It is highly recommended to make use of the optional coaching session before applying. In the previous calls, it was noticeable that applicants had difficulties describing the “added value” of their research endeavor. This comprises 30% of the assessment score. The coaching is especially suitable to develop this aspect. See Sections 5.1 and 6.1.
- The application form asks for keywords. The applications are assigned to reviewers based on those keywords, among other information. Thus, they are important and should range from rather general to specific. Additionally, helpful to select suitable reviewers is when you provide specific suggestion on who could evaluate your proposal.
- The complexity of the research endeavor should be commensurate with workload/pensum and duration. If they are not commensurate, it will have a negative impact on the scoring as “return on investment” is one of the evaluation criteria. Hence, more complex, and hence larger proposals should also generate respective impact and value. See Section 4.4 and 5.1.
- Applicants self-assess their level of research experience (Early Career vs Senior) and their supervisors will be asked to confirm. This information is used by reviewers to apply adequate assessment criteria. Therefore, it is important to give a *realistic* assessment (rather than being very conservative or overstate experience). See Section 4.2.

Specific to Early Career Fellowships

- Applicants for an Early Career Fellowship may nominate two extra references, who will be contacted with a structured survey regarding the applicant. These surveys serve to highlight why applicants are outstanding *aspiring* researchers, as showing excellence by already accomplished results may be more difficult at the start of a career (see Section 8.2).

Specific to lecturers

- Lecturers are encouraged to present a research endeavor that, commensurate with the level of responsibility of their role, allows for the inclusion of a PhD student. See Section 4.3.



2 Introduction

The Cantonal Council of Zurich decided to launch the “Digitalisierungsinitiative der Zürcher Hochschulen”¹ (DIZH) as of April 1, 2020. The aim of the DIZH is to strengthen the competitive position of the Canton of Zurich as a research and development hub in the field of digital transformation and to connect the research expertise of the University of Zurich (UZH), the ZHAW, the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH).

Within the DIZH research cluster, professors, senior researchers, research associates with a PhD and PhD students of all universities will conduct interdisciplinary research concerned with digital transformation across all universities. Each university has its own mode of participating in the research cluster. The ZHAW has established a Fellowship Program (“DIZH Fellows”) to sponsor its researchers and to enable their temporary participation in the DIZH research cluster.

Highly qualified researchers, who are already employed at the ZHAW, will receive the opportunity to collaborate with researchers from the other universities on relevant research endeavors within the DIZH research cluster at its location in Zurich. DIZH Fellows will be able to contribute and develop their expertise to actively shape the digital transformation and to create sustainable value for themselves, the DIZH and the ZHAW.

You can find out more about [the current DIZH Fellows here](#).

3 Objectives

A DIZH Fellowship is meant to provide the opportunity for outstanding ZHAW researchers to create a visible and lasting impact and to contribute to the integration of the ZHAW and the DIZH research cluster. The following objectives are linked to this goal:

- Strengthening the DIZH Fellows’ *personal profiles*, as well as their *home organizational units*, due to the competitive selection process (idea of excellence).
- Strengthening the ZHAW’s research profile in digital transformation; *visibility of the ZHAW* in the output of the DIZH research cluster and beyond.
- Strengthening the competencies of and the *collaboration* within the ZHAW digital community ([Digital Futures Lab](#)); strengthening scientific connections between the DIZH research cluster and the departments and institutes at the ZHAW.
- Strengthening the *impact of applied research on society*, organizations, and individuals, both nationally and internationally, in the area of digital transformation.

¹ Digitalization Initiative of Zurich’s Universities.



4 Framework Conditions

4.1 Eligibility

A DIZH Fellowship serves as a personal sponsorship for outstanding researchers at the ZHAW with a concrete research endeavor in mind. In principle, the following ZHAW employees can apply for a DIZH Fellowship:

- research assistants as PhD students
- research associates with a PhD or in the process of earning a PhD
- lecturers, including professors

Therefore, the call addresses researchers ranging from PhD students, to experienced researchers, to experienced professors. Recognizing the variety of research careers at the ZHAW, the possibility to apply “sur dossier” is not precluded. During the review and rating of the application – according to the criteria laid out in Section 5.1 – the seniority of the applicant will be considered. Early career researchers, especially PhD students, are strongly encouraged to apply for a DIZH Fellowship.

DIZH Fellowships are *sponsorships of the applicants*. This differs from typical project funding in that material expenses, and especially new positions, are generally not sponsored (with one notable exception, see section 4.3). The sponsorship thus consists of the funding of the respective workload/pensum that applicants are active as DIZH Fellows

4.2 Early Career Fellowship vs Senior Fellowship

Applicants will be asked to designate their application as an “Early Career Fellowship” or a “Senior Fellowship” based on their full-time years (FTY) in research. FTY are determined by counting work containing at least 50% research activities at a university, research institute, industrial research department etc. after completing a degree that grants access to doctoral studies:²

- Early Career Fellowship (*usually* PhD students, approx. 0–6 FTY)
- Senior Fellowship (*usually* researchers with a PhD, approx. 4 or more FTY)

The selection board will be asked to compare the applicants to their relevant peer group, and this additional piece of information serves as an aid to identify the appropriate one. This ensures a fair treatment of researchers at the beginning of their career (i.e. their achievements will not be compared to those of a senior researcher with much more experience).

In addition, Early Career Fellowships have adapted evaluation criteria in the review process. See section 5.1. Everything else is identical between the two types of Fellowships.

² While there is no explicit provision to list years spent outside of research (e.g. because of family commitments, health reasons, work in other fields, etc.), these years are implicitly included in the calculation of FTY.



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4.3 Extended Scope for Lecturers

There is an extension to the “personal sponsorship” principle for lecturers and professors: to reflect their level of research experience and seniority, as well as to take into consideration their typical workload, they are encouraged to submit a research endeavor with an extended scope that requests additional funding for a PhD student in addition to their personal commitment. It is also intended to promote early career researchers in their endeavors and increase the profile of the ZHAW as an attractive host of PhD students. The necessity and the scope of the support should be evident from the description of the research endeavor itself.

If approved, applicants will receive additional funding for a PhD candidate at a 60% workload/pensum according to the [ZHAW guideline for doctoral students](#) for the duration of their DIZH Fellowship, on top of the funding for their own workload/pensum as a DIZH Fellow (see section 4.5). The PhD student does not have to be known or named at the time of applying. The applicant simply guarantees to have a PhD student ready at the beginning of the DIZH Fellowship and to have secured their supervision (incl. a declaration of intent of placement in a PhD program or comparable vehicle to ensure accreditation through a PhD-granting institution). This enables the partial financing of a PhD for an existing ZHAW employee or the recruitment of a PhD student as a new ZHAW employee.

4.4 Duration and Pensum/Workload

It is possible to apply for any duration between 3 and 24 months with a workload/pensum ranging from 20% to 80% (given it fits into the maximum cost frame, see section 4.5). The remaining workload/pensum is performed within the existing employment and must be at least 20%. This rule is meant to ensure that DIZH Fellows and their research endeavors remain embedded within their home organizational units and to enable synergies.

Example: Someone with an 80% employment (4 days per week) can apply for a DIZH Fellowship of max. 60% (3 days a week). The remaining 20% (1 day a week) are performed within the existing employment at the ZHAW.

For the duration of the DIZH Fellowships, the sponsored employees reduce their share of planned teaching and other research activities at their home organizational unit accordingly. In particular, the home unit must ensure that lectures will be covered by other employees. If necessary, qualified replacements can be arranged and financed through the reduced personnel cost due to the employee sponsorship.

4.5 Financial Volume and Costs

In addition to the conditions regarding duration and pensum, Fellowships are expected to fall within a certain financial range (see below for calculation). The average Fellowship cost is expected to be CHF 100k and the maximum allowed cost is CHF 200k. Applications exceeding CHF 200k will be rejected for formal reasons. There is no lower limit.

Applicants will have to submit a simple budget including justification as part of the application (see section 8). To calculate the budget, proceed as follows:



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- Use the appropriate ZHAW internal hourly rates for your position and the estimate of 168 hours per month (for a 100% workload/pensum). Note that the Fellowship only funds working hours and that vacation, illness, etc., will have to be booked on the Fellow's home organizational unit cost center. Contact your home organizational unit if you have questions about this.
- PhD positions for applications by lecturers with an extended scope (see section 4.3) will be funded with CHF 60'480 per annum³.

4.6 What topics are eligible for sponsorship?

All research endeavors that deal with relevant questions in the digital transformation space are eligible for sponsorship. This especially includes the following topics, listed in alphabetical order (list is not conclusive):

- Building Information Modeling (BIM)
- Digital x: Digital Health, Digital Business Models, Digital Learning, Digital Ethics, Digital Mobility, Digital Production etc.
- Smart x: Smart Cities, Smart Services, Smart Contracts, Smart Factories, Smart Grids etc.
- Societal aspects and ramifications: impact on work, leadership, families, relationships, demographics, democracy, geopolitics, sustainability etc.
- Technical aspects: Augmented Reality (AR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cyber Security, Data Science, Virtual Reality (VR) etc.
- x 4.0: Work 4.0, Society 4.0, Mobility 4.0, Industry 4.0 etc.
- x-Tech: MedTech, FinTech, EdTech, GovTech etc.

Research endeavors are eligible for sponsorship if they make a substantial contribution to the objectives of the DIZH Fellowship (see Section 3). This contribution must be made explicit in the application.

Research endeavors with an interdisciplinary character are a plus. Connections with other researchers' activities within the DIZH research cluster are desirable and must be illustrated.

4.7 Where are the DIZH Fellows located?

The DIZH Fellows are physically located at the DIZH research cluster location for their respective workload/pensum⁴. The location is shared with the UZH "Digital Society Initiative" at Rämistrasse 69 in Zurich. This is necessary to enable and promote collaboration with other researchers in the cluster and to ensure that the ZHAW plays a visible and active role in all DIZH activities.

³ This reflects a 60% Wissenschaftliche/r Assistent/in II position according to the [ZHAW guideline for doctoral students](#).

⁴ Exceptions are special regulations related to COVID-19 etc., should they go on, or that the research endeavor needs special laboratories or other research infrastructure not available at the DIZH (in which case the applicant makes sure to spend the amount of time at the DIZH that is not necessarily spent with that infrastructure). If you have other concerns (e.g. related to accessibility, please contact us).



5 Evaluation Procedure and Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by three experts (members of the Selection Board) from outside and within the ZHAW over two rounds. The first round consists of a written assessment, which serves as a filter for the second round. The second round consists of an interview with the experts and any other interested members of the Selection Board. See the Timeline (section 7) for the timing of these interviews **and block your calendar for the entire duration** to ensure you can attend an assigned interview slot.

5.1 Round 1 – Written Assessment

In the written assessment, applications will be scored according to the following criteria:

Category (contribution to overall score)	Subcategory	Contribution to Overall Score	
		Senior	Early Career
Applicant (40%)	Professional output Letters of recommendations, publications, presentations, patents, awards, noteworthy professional/academic achievements, attached scientific artefact, etc.	The average score of the two highest rated subcategories makes up the Applicant score (40%)	Score from highest rated subcategory makes up the Applicant score (40%)
	Leadership Successful projects as PI, acquired funding, supervised Master and PhD students, spin-offs, noteworthy achievements in R&D-management, etc.		
	Service Engagement with and standing in research community, committees, etc.		
Research Endeavor (30%)	Scientific quality Feasibility, dealing with related work, appropriateness of methods, etc.	10%	
	Impact on research Scientific novelty, strategic relevance to respective applied science field, etc.	10%	
	Impact on practice Timeliness, tangibility, relevance outside academia (business, society, ...), etc.	10%	
Added Value (30%)	Value for the ZHAW Ability to connect to current and spawn future research, creation of new opportunities, creation of synergies by crossing disciplinary borders, etc.	10%	
	Value for the DIZH Contribution to DIZH goals, networking with other members of the DIZH research cluster, creating visibility, etc.	10%	
	Return on Investment Fellowship cost & setup (duration, financial volume, potential inclusion of a PhD student) in relation to the proposed outcomes.	10%	
Reviewers will score each subcategory as part of the written review. The scores will then be used to calculate the overall scores, taking into account the above listed weights.			

Applications are ranked based on their overall score and the top 40% of applications will move on to the second round.⁵

5.2 Round 2 – Interview

The interviews will take place online and are structured as follows⁶:

⁵ The authors of this call (see end) serve as a committee for individual borderline cases and might change the pure ranking-based decision as a rare exception (e.g., when reviews disagree fundamentally).

⁶ Applicants will receive additional details together with the results of the first round.



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- 5 min – Pitch by applicant
- 15 min – Discussion between applicant, experts, and other interested members of the Selection Board
- 10 min – Discussion between experts and other members of the Selection Board

After the interview, the experts will rate the application on the three main categories (Applicant, Research Endeavor, Added Value). These ratings will replace the first-round ratings for those categories and constitute the final score.⁷

The result of the second round is a ranked list of projects and the ZHAW digital Strategic Council⁸ decides up to which rank DIZH Fellowships will be sponsored.

6 Optional Coaching, Submission Procedure and Timeline

6.1 Optional Coaching

To support potential DIZH Fellows with their application, the ZHAW digital Core Team members (that are part of the Selection Board), and previously successful DIZH Fellows, offer one individualized coaching session per applicant. This optional coaching session is meant to ensure that the proposed research endeavor most effectively covers the selection criteria of the DIZH Fellowship (see Section 5.1). Special emphasis is placed on the third criterion “Added Value”.

Applicants who are interested in a coaching session must contact ZHAW digital at dizh-fellowship@zhaw.ch at the latest, one month before the deadline – i.e., by May 11th, 2021 – to ensure an appointment slot for the session can be found.

6.2 Submission Procedure

The complete application must be received by ZHAW digital before June 11th, 2021, which includes the approval of the application by the applicants' supervisor. This approval consists of:

- Confirmation of self-assessment regarding research experience (see section 4.2)
- Letter of recommendation.

Please note that your supervisor will only be able to approve your application once it's been submitted in the tool (see section 8.2).

After the deadline, the department heads will approve/veto each application. Make sure to inform your line about your application in advance to ensure it will be approved.

⁷ If one expert is missing from the interview, their first-round score will be carried forward. In case of more than one missing expert, additional reviewers will be nominated.

⁸ The Strategic Council consists of the board members of the ZHAW and the co-leadership of ZHAW digital.



After department approval, applications are subject to a formal check by ZHAW digital (e.g. duration, pensum, budget). If there are formal issues, applications will be rejected without the possibility to submit corrections.

7 Timeline

	What?	Who?	When?
Application Phase	Application opens	Applicant	April 9, 2021
	Coaching (optional)	Applicant with a member of the ZHAW digital Core Team or DIZH Fellow	Deadline for asking for appointment: May 11, 2021
	Application closes	Applicant	June 11, 2021
	Department heads approve/veto applications	Heads of Departments	June 18, 2021
	Formal Check	ZHAW digital	June 18, 2021
Selection Phase	Evaluation – Round 1 – Written Assessment	Selection Board	June–August 2021
	Communication of Feedback and Results – Round 1	ZHAW digital	September 10, 2021
	Evaluation – Round 2 - Interview	Selection Board and Applicants	October 4 – October 6, 2021
Decision Phase	Create finalized ranking list	ZHAW digital	October 15, 2021
	Determine Cut-Off on list for 2021 Fellowships	ZHAW digital Strategic Council	October 29, 2021
	Communication of Feedback and Results – Round 2	ZHAW digital	November 1, 2021
Fellowship Start	Start of the DIZH Fellowships	Successful DIZH Fellows	January 2022

8 Application Form and Instructions

A complete application for a DIZH Fellowship consists of a completed application form⁹ and attachments on the ZHAW digital portal <https://zhawdigital.grantplatform.com>.

- Applicant¹⁰:
 - Submission language¹¹
 - Name

⁹ Character counts always include spaces.

¹⁰ See table in section 5.1 for more information about how the questions relate to the evaluation criteria and what to emphasize.

¹¹ Both German and English applications are admissible, this information helps with assigning reviewers.



- Academic degrees
- Home institute and department
- Formal position at the ZHAW: WiAs / WiMa / Lecturer
- Function at the ZHAW (a description that helps understand what you do day-to-day)
- Self-assignment of Fellowship Type (see section 4.2) as either Early Career Fellowship or Senior Fellowship.
- Links
 - Link to online ZHAW profile
 - Link to website of choice (research profile, personal website, etc).
- Attachments¹²
 - Scientific CV (max. 2 pages)
 - List of publications and patents
 - List of presentations (incl. designation as national/international/keynote)
 - List of acquired projects and funding (name, duration, funding amount, funder (e.g. Innosuisse/CTI/SNF/EU etc.), own role in the project team)
 - One artefact of choice to highlight the quality of applicant's work (e.g. a publication, open source software as code-repository, feedback from others etc.) of max. 10 pages (if necessary, shorten the artifact and include a link to the full version).
- Why are you among the outstanding researchers at the ZHAW? (max. 1,000 characters; refer to CV and attachments for proof/details)
- Research endeavor¹³:
 - Title
 - Abstract (max. 300 characters)
 - Keywords (up to 5, used to select reviewers)
 - Suggestions for reviewers (optional, can be considered by ZHAW digital to find/assign appropriate reviewers)
 - Research proposal (max. 5,000 characters, in-text references included)
 - Attachments (optional)
 - References used in research proposal

¹² There are no binding templates for these documents, you are free to use existing ones if you have them.

¹³ See table in section 5.1 for more information about how the questions relate to the evaluation criteria and what to emphasize.



- 1 accompanying document of max. 1 page that illustrates (an aspect of) the research proposal but must not be necessary for understanding the proposal (reviewers are not required to review this document).
- What is the research endeavor's relationship to digital transformation, especially within the context of applied research? (max. 1,000 characters)
- What will the outcomes at the end of the DIZH Fellowship be (e.g. scientific result/publications, pilot, etc.)? (max. 1,000 characters)
- How will these outcomes impact current and future research in the respective field of applied science? (max. 1000 characters)
- How will these outcomes impact current and future practice outside of academia? (max. 1000 characters)
- Added Value¹⁴
 - Describe the value that the Fellowship would add for the ZHAW (max. 1,000 characters)
 - Describe the value that the Fellowship would add for the DIZH (max. 1,000 characters)
- Fellowship Setup and Cost:
 - Desired duration of DIZH Fellowship (in months, between 3 and 24 months)
 - Desired workload/pensum of DIZH Fellowship (in percent, between 20% and 80%)
 - Desired starting date (in 2022)
 - Budget/total Fellowship cost (see section 4.5)
 - For lecturers only
 - Extended Scope: yes/no (see section 4.3)
 - If yes: What will your role in the Fellowship be? (max. 400 characters; there is no bias for or against a specific choice of role)
 - Why is this setup (duration, pensum, extended scope) appropriate for you and the proposed research endeavor? Explain. (max. 600 characters)
- Supervisor/References
 - Name and Email of direct supervisor
 - Name and Email of two extra references (only for Early Career Fellowships)
- Formal checks:
 - I can personally attend an assigned interview slot on one of the days during the period between October 4 – October 6: yes / no
 - I will start a granted DIZH Fellowship in the year 2022: yes / no

¹⁴ See table in section 5.1 for more information about how the questions relate to the evaluation criteria and what to emphasize.



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- I will work physically at the location of the DIZH for a granted DIZH Fellowship workload/pensum: yes / no
- The above information is correct and if granted a Fellowship, I will accept the conditions as I presented them (duration, pensum, budget): yes/no
- I am not dependent on additional pending funding decisions (e.g. through SNF, Innosuisse, etc.) to carry out the Fellowship as proposed, if granted: yes/no

8.1 Explanations about Attachments

- *Scientific CV.* Aside from the usual information about the applicant's academic and professional career, the CV should contain information about possible startups/spinoffs, awards, number of supervised students from Master level up, appointments within the subject's research community, memberships in committees etc., as well as other notable achievements during the applicant's studies and/or career. This is especially relevant for Early Career Fellowships.

- *Letter of recommendation and letters of reference.* The letter of recommendation is written and signed by the direct supervisor of the organizational unit where the applicant is employed. It addresses the applicant's professional and scientific qualities, the connection between the proposed research endeavor and the R&D-strategy of the institute/center, as well as the possibilities to integrate or make permanent the research after the end of the DIZH Fellowship.

To facilitate showing personal excellence despite a shorter scientific career, applicants for an Early Career Fellowship may nominate two more references. The references will be contacted with a brief, structured survey assessing the personal and professional qualities of the applicant.

- *Research proposal.* The research proposal describes the research endeavor and, in particular, takes into account its subject-excellence and the potential impact of its results (which may require statements about feasibility, relevancy and novelty). As scientific quality is a major evaluation criterion, make sure to situate your proposal well in the related work and motivate your research question as well as your proposed methodology.

How this can potentially be tied to other research within the DIZH research cluster and the ZHAW as a whole, and how it can be linked to the strategy and research of the applicant's home organizational unit at the ZHAW, is explicitly asked for in the questions on "Added Value". In addition, you can address there how the DIZH Fellowship will generate sustainable added value for the DIZH research cluster and the ZHAW digital community (especially this last aspect can be shaped during an optional coaching session - see Section 6.1).

8.2 Submission Instructions

To submit an application, navigate to zhawdigital.grantplatform.com and create an account, if you do not have one already. Do not use Internet Explorer.

- Use your real name and your ZHAW email address to create an account.
- Once logged in, you can create a new application (choose "DIZH Fellowship 2021" if there are several options).



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- The information you enter gets auto saved once you have completed the first tab.
- You can only submit one application.
- You can make changes to your application until you submit. After that, your application is final.
- Your direct supervisor – and if you are an early career researcher, your references (see Section 6.2) – will be contacted automatically through this tool. They will then be able to submit their information directly.
- They will be **notified only once you *submit your application in the system***, and they need to upload their information by the deadline on June 11th, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. We recommend that you get in touch with them well in advance of the deadline and inform them that they will receive a notification from ZHAW digital via “awardforce/GoodGrants”.
 - Applications missing direct supervisor approval and letters of recommendation by the deadline will be considered *incomplete* and will be *rejected*.
 - Applications missing references (only for Early Career Fellowships) will be considered complete and will advance to the first evaluation round.
- If you, your direct supervisor, or your references do not receive any emails from the tool, tell them to check the spam folder.

If you cannot use this tool or have any questions, please contact us.

9 Contact

For questions about this call as well as to schedule a coaching session (see Section 6.1), please contact in German or English:

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