

Early Career Award Guidelines

The Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW) presents the Early Career Award each year to researchers at an early stage of their career from all fields within the humanities and social sciences. The total amount of the award is 18,000 Swiss francs: 10,000 Swiss francs for the first prize, 5000 Swiss francs for the second, and 3000 Swiss francs for the third.

This document sets out the eligibility criteria for the award, including who can apply, which articles are eligible, and how the application procedure works.

In case of doubts or conflicts, the [regulations](#) count.

1. Criteria for applicants

The applicant or the applicants must belong to the up-and-coming generation of researchers in the Swiss humanities and social sciences research community. All eligible fields are listed on the [website of the Federal Statistical Office](#). Law and economics are also eligible for the award.

Affiliation and nationality

Applications may be submitted by

- a) researchers working at a Swiss higher education institution at the time of publication of their article. This also applies if the applicants were affiliated with a Swiss higher education institution but were temporarily working abroad (for example with a postdoctoral mobility grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation) at the time of publication of their article.
- b) researchers working abroad and holding a Swiss nationality or a Swiss residence or settlement permit at the time of publication of their article.

Eligibility requires fulfilment of at least one of these two conditions.

Academic age

Applicants must hold a doctorate (PhD) at the time of publication of their article. Applicants are eligible if their article was published within six years of receiving their doctorate. The date of the PhD examination (defense) and the first publication date of the article are decisive.

Example:

- Date of PhD defense: 8 November 2022
 - Publication date of the article: 31 August 2026
- Academic age: 3 years and 9 months

The six-year eligibility period may be extended in duly justified cases (see below).

2. Criteria for the submitted article

Eligibility requires fulfilment of all the following criteria:

- The article must have been published between October of the previous year and October of the year of application. The exact dates will be specified on the website of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (www.sagw.ch) as soon as the call opens.
- The date of the article's first publication counts. Whether it was first published online or in print doesn't matter.
- The submitted publication must be an article. Book chapters from edited volumes are eligible. Monographs and chapters of monographs are not accepted.
- The article must have been published in a peer-reviewed publication. In duly justified cases other publication quality controls are also accepted.
- Accepted languages are English, German, French, and Italian.
- Each candidate may only submit one article per competition year.

3. Extension of the six-year eligibility period

The six-year eligibility period after the PhD (see section «Academic age») may be extended in duly justified cases. These include maternity (up to 18 months per child), paternity leave, or other reasons such as care duties or inability to work due to illness or accident. The combined extension for these other reasons may not exceed 24 months.

The online application form (mySAGW) allows applicants to request an extension of the eligibility period. When making such a request, applicants must indicate the duration of the extension in months and state the reasons for their request. It is also possible to provide these reasons on a confidential basis. In this case, applicants should refrain from filling in the respective field. The responsible person at SAGW will contact them by e-mail.

Example:

- Date of PhD defense: 21 May 2018
 - Publication date of the article: 3 June 2026
 - Reason for extension: Mother of two children, born in 2019 and 2025
- Academic age: 5 years (corresponding to 8 years minus 2x18 months)

4. Co-authorship

In case of a jointly authored article, applicants may apply either individually or as a collective.

Individual applications

The person must have made the main contribution to the article. An author's contribution statement describing the applicant's main contribution, signed by all authors, is mandatory (see below for details).

Collective applications

All the authors of the article or only the main authors may apply. All co-applicants must have made an equal contribution to the article and meet the formal eligibility criteria (see section «Criteria for applicants»). An authors' contribution statement from the applying authors describing their respective contributions, signed by all authors, is required if not all authors of the article are applying (see below for details).

5. Required documents

The following documents must be uploaded in PDF in mySAGW:

1. The article with which you are applying for the award.
2. A cover letter of maximum two pages explaining the originality of the article, its contribution to research in the relevant field, and its broader significance for other disciplines. The cover letter may be written in English, German, French, or Italian.
3. A curriculum vitae of maximum two pages. In the case of a collective application, all co-applicants must submit a curriculum vitae.
4. For jointly authored articles, an authors' contribution statement (of maximum one page) must be submitted if not all authors are applying. All authors listed on the article must sign the statement. The statement specifies the extent of the applicant's (or applicants') academic contribution to the article. Main authorship (individual or collective) is determined by:
 - Substantial contributions to the article's conception, design, data acquisition, analysis and/or interpretations
 - Substantial involvement in drafting the article and writing its key parts
 - Ensuring the originality of the article and compliance with scientific and ethical standards
 - Final approval of the published version

Letters of recommendation are not required and will not be considered.

6. Application procedure

Applicants must submit their application via an online application form in mySAGW. The application deadline is specified in the call and on the SAGW website.

1. Create an account on my.sagw.ch by clicking on 'Register'. You will receive a verification e-mail after your account has been created. Please note: If you have already registered for the Early Career Award on mySAGW, please do not create a new account, but use your existing account.
2. Log in and select 'Create a new application'.
3. Fill in all sections of the application form and upload the required documents. You can log out at any time; the information will be saved, and you can complete your application the next time you log in.
4. Once your application is complete, click on 'Submit' in the 'Completion' section.
5. You can download a confirmation of your completed application from mySAGW under 'Download' → 'Acknowledgment of receipt'. We will not send you an automatic e-mail confirming the successful submission of your application.

Collective applications

One of the co-applicants is specified as the 'contact person' for the application in the online application form. This person is responsible for the accuracy of the information provided and will correspond with the SAGW. The other co-applicants are listed as 'additional applicants'. The contact person can invite co-applicants to complete the application. To do so, use the button 'Invitations' on the overview page.

7. Evaluation

A jury is responsible for the scientific evaluation of the articles and the selection of the prizewinners. A list of the members of the jury is available on the SAGW website.

Evaluation criteria

- Originality of the article
- Significance of the research contribution to the field and to a wider public
- Research effort
- Linguistic quality of the article
- Links to other fields and interdisciplinarity

Stages of the evaluation process

1. Administrative verification: Verification of the formal eligibility criteria is carried out by the General Secretariat of the SAGW. Applicants who do not pass this round will be notified.
2. Jury evaluation 1st round: All applications that meet the formal eligibility criteria will be read by two members of the jury who will each assign an evaluation score. These scores will determine which applicants will be shortlisted and become finalists.
3. Jury evaluation 2nd round: The shortlisted applications will be read and evaluated by all the members of the jury. The scores will be added up and ranked.
4. Jury evaluation 3rd round: All members of the jury meet to make the final decision. During the meeting, they discuss the applications with the highest scores. The jury members then vote on the three prizes (first prize, second prize, third prize).
5. Communication of results: As soon as the decision has been made (usually in April), the prizewinners and finalists are notified by e-mail, as are the applicants who did not advance past the first and/or second round of the jury's evaluation. A Diploma of Merit will be awarded to all finalists who are not among the three prizewinners.
6. Video recording session: The SAGW communications team will invite the prizewinners to a short video interview. This interview takes place either in advance of or during the annual meeting of the SAGW.

8. Award ceremony

The prize is awarded at the annual meeting of the SAGW (usually held in May or June). The prizewinners will have the opportunity to present the topic of their award-winning article.

9. Prize money

The prize money will be transferred to the prizewinners after the award ceremony: 10,000 Swiss francs for the first prize, 5000 Swiss francs for the second prize and 3000 Swiss francs for the third prize.