



FAQs – DSI Bridge Postdoc Call

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1 Evaluation Process

1.1 Who is evaluating the applications?

The evaluation procedure has several stages:

- First, after a formal check, your application will be overall reviewed at least by three reviewers/professors (October 2023). All reviewers are DSI members. Based on those ratings, a longlist of candidates will be generated.
- The longlisted candidates will be reviewed by up to three reviewers/professor of the disciplines related to your project (November 2023). Based on those reviews, a shortlist of candidates will be generated.
- The shortlisted candidates will be asked to outline their budget plans and will be invited for an interview session (mid-December 2023) with the committee members. The committee includes seven professors from the University of Zurich, one professor from the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH), one professor from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) and one representative from the Zurich University of Arts (ZHdK).

1.2 What are the success criteria for the selection of projects?

- Key criteria are the quality of the project proposal, its relation to digitalization and its impact on society.
- Furthermore, the project needs to be interdisciplinary and inter-institutional. For latter, the candidate should outline, how (s)he intends to create a link to the other DIZH institutions (see point 5 below).

1.3 How many positions are available?

We are aiming for 3-4 Postdocs; the amount of excellent proposal will determine the final number of Postdocs.

2 Academic Age & Eligibility

2.1 Are there any eligibility conditions in terms of e.g. academic age or else?

- You need to have your PhD defended (or equivalent) latest by end of November 2023.
- We are looking for «young researchers»; i.e., researchers with maximum 4 years net academic age as defined by the Swiss National Science Foundation (see https://www.snf.ch/media/en/Of9kzylTRoaTlliN/SNSF_net-academic-age.pdf and here: <https://www.snf.ch/en/gKcnwW6aEft4bMPF/page/your-curriculum-vitae-all-about-the-cv-format>).

2.2 Do candidates need to have already completed their PhD thesis when applying?

No, you need to have your PhD defense (or equivalent) latest by November 30, 2023.

2.3 Is the DSI Bridge Postdoc call open to candidates external to the University of Zurich?

Yes, the call is open to all researchers with a PhD - nationally and internationally.

2.4 Do I have to be a member of the DSI at the time of application?

No, you do not. However, you can register anyways, if you are interested in the activities of the DSI, independent of any UZH affiliation:

<https://www.dsi.uzh.ch/en/research/network/registration.html>

3 Template

3.1 Is there a template for the project outline?

– Yes. You can find it here: <https://www.dsi.uzh.ch/en/research/funding/bridge-postdoc.html>

– Please be aware that in the first selection round your proposal will be most likely evaluated by persons which are not from your discipline. Therefore, make sure that your proposal can be understood for reviewers of all disciplines.

3.2 Are there formatting rules for the 5-page outline?

Yes, see template.

3.3 Does the 5-page limit include the bibliography?

No.

3.4 How detailed should the timeline be?

Not very detailed. Simply give an overview on your planned work packages.

3.5 Is there a template for the motivation letter?

No.

3.6 Is it possible to add an annex to the proposal?

– Yes, this is possible if you think it is necessary.

– Make sure, that you label it as annex. Do not expect that the reviewers will have a detailed look at the annex; thus, relevant information regarding the project should not be in the annex. The annex should not exceed five pages.

3.7 Can I submit more than one application addressing different projects?

No. You apply as a person for a Postdoc position. In the project outline you are asked to describe one project (which can consist of several work packages/ subprojects).

4 Topic

4.1 Does the proposed topic need to be linked to the DSI Roadmap?

No. Topics and research questions are open, they need however to be linked to digitalization and its impact on science and/or society. The DSI roadmap is available here (right box at the bottom of the page): <https://www.dsi.uzh.ch/en/about/about-dsi.html>

5 Inter-Institutionality

5.1 How should the expected inter-institutional research look like?

- The inter-institutional research refers to the other universities of the DIZH, i.e. ZHAW, ZHdK and PHZH. The DIZH is an initiative of the Zurich Universities: UZH, ZHAW, ZHdK and PHZH; for more information see: www.dizh.ch
- We expect you to create or strengthen collaborations with one or more of the other universities (e.g., by outlining collaborators working at other DIZH universities, organizing joint workshops etc.)

5.2 I plan to establish a bridge between the UZH and the DIZH institution X. How should I outline this in the proposal?

Please write that you would like to establish a bridge with X and outline, how you plan to collaborate, what you plan to work on, etc. Describe in section C of the provided template how your project benefits from the collaboration.

5.3 Do I need a letter from the collaborating universities?

- Yes, you should provide a letter from a partner at another DIZH university (not from UZH) outlining that they have been contacted by you and that they are in principle interested to collaborate with you. The letter does not have to state any concrete commitment with respect to collaboration time or co-funding for the project.
- If you have difficulties to find a partner at a DIZH University you might contact the DIZH contact points: ZHAW: digital@zhaw.ch, ZHdK: contactpoint.dizh@zhdk.ch and PHZH: andrea.piga@phzh.ch

5.4 Can I also collaborate with other universities outside of the scope of the DIZH?

Yes, you can (in addition to the collaboration with another DIZH University).

5.5 As my research builds on the collaboration with companies, would you advise me to attach their letters of support to the application?

- Collaboration with companies is encouraged, since one of the aims of the DIZH is to strengthen Zurich as a center of research and business.
- However, we do not ask for recommendation letters, but if you want to include them, you can do so.

5.6 Within this research program, will it be possible to collaborate with other researchers from other fields?

Yes, it is actually a requirement. As a DSI Bridge Postdoc, you will be expected to work interdisciplinary and establish or strengthen the content links within the DIZH and to create synergies across the universities.

6 PHD MENTORING

6.1 Is it possible to request a PhD position with the DSI Bridge Postdoc position?

- Yes, as stated in the call text, you can ask for a PhD student.
- A PhD student always needs to have a UZH professor as a main supervisor. It is, however, not yet necessary to outline who this will be. This would be determined in the early phase of your project in case of approval.

6.2 Do I have to request a PhD position with the DSI Bridge Postdoc position?

No, not necessarily. You may also ask for funding for a (temporary) research assistant and increase the budget for material costs if your project requires that.

7 FUNDING

7.1 How much funding is available per position?

There are approx. CHF 780'000 available per position. Deviations are possible.

7.2 What are the costs for the Postdoc position and the PhD position / research assistant?

- A 100% Postdoc-position equals an amount of CHF 118'000 (full costs incl. all social security costs) per year. You can reduce your own employment to up to about 80% if you need more funds for other activities.
- For the PhD position (4 years), a total amount of CHF 232'000 (full costs incl. all social security costs; for 4 years) should be included in the budget.
- For a research assistant 100% (master level) the costs are CHF 109'000 (full costs incl. all social security costs) per year.
- If you need information regarding personnel costs of other categories, please contact dizh-postdocs@dsi.uzh.ch

7.3 Does the funding just cover my salary or also cover cost of research and material costs (e.g., setting up a search engine)?

- The funding covers your salary, the PhD position (or a research assistant), and some material resources.
- If you are invited for an interview, you will be asked to provide a detailed budget for your expenses.
- A successful applicant is expected to secure third party funding during his/her Postdoc.

7.4 What can the additional material/research costs include?

- There are various possibilities: E.g., salary of collaborators, outsourced programming work, ...
- Please note that the DSI will not cover costs of a computer for you or for your PhD students; so if you need such material, it should be included in the budget.

7.5 Can funding for material resources or the PhD student go to the collaborating university?

- It is not possible to transfer money to any collaborating institution.
- The benefit of the collaborating institution is, that you are paid by the UZH and that you can offer «yourself» (i.e., workforce) for a collaboration. The same accounts for other uses of the funds (e.g., for a PhD student or material resources).
- The funds are yours to use and the collaborating institution benefits by not having to pay you. However, the collaborating institution are free to top up your position by e.g., assigning Master students or similar workforce, material resources etc. for your project.

7.6 I am a Postdoc with a fixed salary. Can I just apply for the PhD salary?

- No, we are looking for Postdocs and will not fund separate PhD positions for an already funded Postdoc.
- The call is for Postdoc positions, and to make it more attractive for applicants, we offer the possibility to finance a PhD position as part of a planned Postdoc project.

8 EMPLOYMENT

8.1 Where will I be employed?

You will be employed by the UZH Digital Society Initiative.

8.2 When does the possible employment start?

- As early as possible. The earliest possible start is January 1, 2024.
- The exact starting date depends on you. Should your application be accepted, you theoretically can start at the first possible date, which depends on your current employment (in case you have to quit), your visa status (in case you need one), your move to Switzerland, etc.
- However, you have to start latest by June 1, 2024. Otherwise, you will lose your funding.

8.3 Will the applicants be employed as a Postdoc or Research Fellow for this position?

You will be employed as a Postdoc.

8.4 Do I need to have a supervisor at the beginning to host me or not?

No, you are expected to do your research independently. Only if you also want to employ a PhD student you need to find a professor who is willing to formally supervise the PhD.

8.5 Where will my workplace be?

- Your workplace will be at the DSI in our Co-Working Space.
- The workplace of the PhD student of your project will be at the same place or at the institute of the PhD's supervisor.
- You can also have a second workplace at another institute of the UZH and/or at one of the other collaborating partner institutions if this facilitates your research project. This, however, needs to be organized by you.

8.6 Are there possibilities for the successful candidates to be employed as Assistant Professors at UZH afterwards?

There is no "tenure track" associated to this position. You certainly can apply to suitable position at UZH (and elsewhere).

8.7 If I would take over a new position during the timeframe of the postdoc: what will happen to my funding?

- The fellowship ends when the Postdoc leaves the UZH, and funds related to the fellowship cannot be transferred to any other institution.
- An exception concerns the costs of the PhD student: Those funds remain available to you; including material costs that are needed such that the person can finalize the PhD within the timeframe of in total four years.

8.8 What happens to the PhD student if I take over a new position elsewhere within the timeframe of the Postdoc?

- Formally, the PhD student is supervised by your collaborating UZH professor. Both funding and workplace for the PhD student remain available.
- We expect that you continue supervision of the student (in collaboration with the UZH professor) until the student has finalized his/her PhD.

8.9 Can I lose the fellowship?

Formally, your employment duration is one year, and it will be renewed every year until the end of the fellowship. You will sign an agreement with the DSI outlining your rights and duties as Postdoc. In case of serious violations of this agreement, the fellowship can be terminated earlier.

9 WORKLOAD

9.1 How much is the standard workload?

80-100% percent employment.

9.2 Would the position allow for a habilitation at the same time?

Yes, you can write a habilitation in parallel.

For all other questions please send an email to dizh-postdocs@dsi.uzh.ch