Early Career Fellowships, Collegium Helveticum, Zurich

Collegium Helveticum Semper-Sternwarte (ETH/STW) Schmelzbergstrasse 25
CH-8006 Zurich Switzerland, Sep 1, 2026–Jun 30, 2027
Application deadline: Feb 12, 2026
collegium.ethz.ch/fellowships/early-career-fellowship

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Do you hold a PhD in art history or a related field, or a master's degree from an art school? Does your work cross and transgress disciplinary boundaries in unconventional ways? Are you looking for a vibrant, transdisciplinary research community? Then you might consider applying for a 10--month residential early-career fellowship at the Collegium Helveticum. Open to all disciplines, the fellowship begins on September 1, 2026, and the call for submissions is now live until February 12, 2026 (17:00 CET).

With its early-career fellowship program, the Collegium supports outstandingly promising academics and artists at a critical stage of their career.

Early-career fellows are free to pursue their individual projects as outlined in their application, and they receive support from the Collegium's team. Projects carried out at the Collegium may convince both by their relevance and originality, spanning from blue-sky research to applied science, as well as from fine arts to artistic research. The Collegium also encourages small interdisciplinary teams of up to three people to apply with a joint project.

About the fellowship
Early-career fellows are working in academic or artistic disciplines at postdoctoral or equivalent level for art school graduates, in cases where the institution does not award doctoral degrees. We invite international applications as well as applications from scholars and artists currently affiliated with one of the Collegium's supporting institutions, ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich, and the Zurich University of the Arts. The Collegium welcomes diversity and is committed to provide a family friendly workplace. Therefore, we acknowledge care work, part-time employment, or career breaks and consider applications proposing joint research in job-sharing.

With its early-career fellowship program, the Collegium nurtures an environment for promising academics and artists at a critical stage of their career. The program supports courageous projects that cut across and transgress disciplinary boundaries in unconventional ways. As part of their application, each fellow proposes an interdisciplinary event centered on their work, contributing to the Collegium's academic and artistic program.

The fellowship can also be used to further develop a well-conceived and clearly defined project

proposal into an interdisciplinary proposal for a major grant, such as an ERC or SNSF Starting Grant, or an SNSF Ambizione Grant. The fellowship is not designed to support the initial formulation of ideas or projects that are still at a very early stage, nor is it intended to support doctoral dissertations.

We also encourage small interdisciplinary teams of up to three people to apply with a joint project.

Eligibility
Applicants must hold a doctoral degree in an academic discipline, or a master's degree from an art school in cases where doctoral degrees are not awarded. Eligibility is based on the certified date of the PhD defense (or equivalent degree) and the start date of the fellowship. Applicants must fall within an academic age of five years, which is automatically calculated in the application platform. When calculating this five-year period, factors such as parental or care responsibilities, career breaks, part-time employment, and other relevant circumstances will be taken into account. Applicants who wish to make a claim against the five-year threshold must provide supporting documentation.
In all cases, the qualifying degree must have been awarded no more than eight years before the start of the fellowship (i.e. September 1, 2026).

Official confirmation of the completed doctoral degree from the respective university, or doctoral or master's degree from an art school (if the institution does not award doctoral degrees) is required and must be submitted with the application. If you do not have a certificate by the time of application, please submit either a transcript of record that confirms that you received a doctorate or master's degree from an art school, or a letter by your advisor or department chair confirming that you will have your doctorate or master's degree from an art school in hand by June 2026. A PhD certificate or equivalent is required at least three months prior to the start of the fellowship to ensure that all paperwork can be processed in a timely manner.

Associate fellow
Early-career fellows require the support from a faculty member at one of the three supporting universities, ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich, and the Zurich University of the Arts, who is willing to become an associate fellow and who will serve as their academic partner during the fellowship. Applicants are advised to initiate contact and obtain support well in advance.

Role and eligibility of associate fellows
Associate fellows are established researchers or artists affiliated with one of the supporting universities. They are usually tenured or tenure-track faculty. If this is not the case, two associate fellows may jointly support an early-career fellow with a co-signed letter of support. In such cases, one of the co-signers must hold the rank of professor or department chair. Associate fellows may agree to integrate early-career fellows into their group part-time and provide infrastructure for their project.

Limitations
Applicants must not have been employed under the direct supervision of the potential associate fellow within the twelve months prior to the start of the fellowship.

Each associate fellow may support only one application in a specific field. A second application can be supported only if it is in a clearly distinct field.

Letter of support
At the application stage, potential associate fellows are required to provide an assessment of the applicant and their project; they confirm their willingness to provide a letter of support if the candidate is long-listed. The letter itself will be requested and uploaded only once the candidate reaches this stage.

The letter of support details why and how the associate fellow will support the early-career fellow's project and how they can help to build links with Zurich's academic and art communities.

General information

Employment
Early-career fellows are employed full-time as postdoctoral researchers at ETH Zurich for the duration of the fellowship. The amount is based on ETH Zurich salary rates for postdoctoral researchers, currently ranging from approximately CHF 75,000 to CHF 85,000 for 10 months, paid in monthly instalments. Early-career fellows are eligible to receive up to CHF 2,000 to support travel and research expenses. As ETH Zurich employees, early-career fellows who take care of children of minor age or children in education may apply for a family allowance.

The fellowship requires full-time commitment. In exceptional cases, applicants employed by another institution must obtain and provide official documentation confirming that they will be on unpaid leave for the entire fellowship period.

Duration and start date
Early-career fellows spend ten months at the Collegium, starting on September 1, 2026, until June 30, 2027.

Infrastructure
Early-career fellows are provided with a desk, access to IT and library infrastructure as well as a computer if required. Since the Collegium cannot provide laboratory infrastructure or studio space on site, early-career fellows in exceptional cases can arrange to use up to 40 percent of their weekly working time to do work outside of the Semper Observatory if this is essential for the proposed project or furthers their skills in important ways. Usually, such arrangements would be made in close cooperation with the associate fellow and require approval by the Collegium's director. Fellows also have access to the universities' sport and activity programs.

Attendance and participation
Early-career fellows are required to be present at the Collegium on weekdays to facilitate informal exchange. They participate in the regular seminars, workshop discussions, and Jours Fixes with other fellows and present and discuss their ongoing work. Early-career fellows contribute to the Collegium's academic and artistic program by organizing an event related to their fellowship project, for which they will receive organizational and financial support of up to CHF 10,000. Typical formats for events are workshops, lectures, panel discussions, exhibitions, or performances but there are no specific limitations set by the Collegium.

Note for international applicants
Early-career fellows are employed at ETH Zurich for the duration of their fellowship and need a valid work and residence permit for Switzerland. Our partners at ETH Human Resources provide support throughout this process. However, please obtain information about the requirements as early as possible. Information is available on the ETH Zurich services and resources page (https://ethz.ch/staffnet/en/employment-and-work/international.html). The Collegium cannot provide housing for its early-career fellows. You can find information regarding housing in Zurich on the page of the joint housing office of the University of Zurich and ETH Zurich.

Application
Applications for the fellow year 2026–2027 can be submitted until February 12, 2026 (17:00 CET). Online interviews with the applicants advancing to the next stage of the assessment are scheduled for April 20 and 21, 2026. Be sure to reserve these dates. Applications via email or postal services can not be considered.

Applications can only be submitted via eResearch. To assist with preparation, please find information below regarding submission requirements, text length, and other relevant details. The download section also provides a step-by-step instruction guide for submitting your application through eResearch.

Textboxes on eResearch
- Project (max 250 words)
Title/subtitle, 3-5 key words, aim(s) of project (max 50 words), summary of project.
- Why is the Collegium the ideal place? (max 250 words)
Why is the Collegium the right place to carry out your proposed project, and how can you and your project contribute to and benefit from its interdisciplinary environment?
- Key contributions (max 250 words)
List your key contributions to your field and your professional context.
- Personal statement
A statement reflecting in your overarching goals and motivation for professional activities you have involved in.
- Description of event (max 350 words)
Please outline an event with interdisciplinary character related to your proposed project that is feasible within the maximum budget. Also explain how you, your project, and the Collegium would benefit from the event.
- Event budget
Please create a budget for the planned event, organized into the following categories: materials and consumables, accommodation, travel, and other. The Collegium retains an event budget of up to CHF 10,000 for each event organized by an early-career fellow.
Use this sample budget to estimate costs.

PDF upload
- Completed project proposal
Download the template here: https://collegium.ethz.ch/fellowships/early-career-fellowship
- Curriculum vitae
Including full list of publications and other relevant output.

- CV including full list of publications and other relevant output.
- Copy of your highest degree certificate
Doctoral degree or, for art schools, an equivalent master's degree.
- Passport/ID
Please prepare a PDF copy of the relevant pages of your passport. Swiss and EU/EFTA citizens can alternatively submit a copy of their ID (front and back).
- Supplementary information
Additional information to support claims regarding academic age.

Do not upload other additional materials including portfolios or writing samples.

We ask for your understanding that we can only consider complete applications.

Please download the necessary documents here and use the website's application form: https://collegium.ethz.ch/fellowships/early-career-fellowship

Questions & contact
Prior to contacting us at info@collegium.ethz.ch, please make sure to have read all available materials carefully, including the FAQs. The clearer your question or needs, the easier and faster we can assist you.

As we receive large numbers of applications, we ask for your understanding that we are limited in our ability to respond to questions. We will not be able to answer questions about exceptions from eligibility criteria. If you have strong reasons why exemptions from the eligibility criteria should be made, please justify these reasons in a supplementary document and upload it with your application.

Please find more information here about what types of projects and candidates we are seeking: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://collegium.ethz.ch/media/pages/fellowships/early-career-fellowship/3f4a29bb85-1762874559/ch_ecfellowships_2026_27_profile.pdf

Reference:

STIP: Early Career Fellowships, Collegium Helveticum, Zurich. In: ArtHist.net, Dec 4, 2025 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/51277>.