

Directive: Extension of Fixed-term Employment Contracts or Fellowships for Teaching and Research Staff (CCER)

1 Context

The health crisis linked to the Covid-19 epidemic strongly affected research activities following the closure of the University's buildings between 17 March and 11 May 2020 in accordance with the recommendations of the federal and cantonal authorities. This situation caused a delay in the research work of all members of the community, with a particularly strong impact on young researchers who are funded on a temporary basis and whose career progression is based on the results obtained during this defined funding period. The Rectorate wishes to extend the contracts of young researchers whose work has been interrupted.

2 Objective

The objective is to set up a mechanism to extend the employment contract or salary grant of young researchers who are temporarily funded, i.e. doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers, senior-assistants, recipients of federal excellence scholarship or other fellowships, regardless of the type of funding. This extension, in principle for 2 months, is intended to compensate for the consequences of the lockdown of the University, i.e. the delay in research work, and the increased needs in terms of teaching.

The system takes into account the diversity of situations and sources of funding (funds from the State of Geneva (DIP fund), Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), European or other third party funds, fellowships granted by a third party) in order to fully respect the principle of equity which applies to all members of the University. For all these researchers, the extension of their employment contract or salary grant by two months, or even up to six months in a few duly justified cases, will be linked to the interruption of their activities due to the force majeure represented by the Covid-19 epidemic.

3 Scope of functions and status

This scheme is open to doctoral assistants, post-doctoral fellows and senior-assistants. Researchers engaged on third party funds, typically “candocs”, post-doctoral fellows, advanced researchers, holders of Ambizione or PRIMA grants, can also apply for this scheme.

Recipients of federal excellence scholarships, doctoral, post-doctoral or young researcher fellowships who do not have a contract with the University of Geneva but who are active within

a research group led by a member of the University of Geneva, may also apply for an extension of their fellowship, granted for a period of two months, for a monthly amount equivalent to the monthly amount of the fellowship received between January and May 2020.

4 Framework

4.1. Motives

Requests based on one of the following grounds will be considered for an extension of the employment contract or fellowship:

1. The research activities have been *materially impacted* by circumstances: the researcher has been unable to collect the data necessary for his or her research project, to access infrastructure - laboratories, animal facilities, platforms, software and specialized tools -, databases, library resources or archives. In addition, his or her data may have been lost or degraded.
2. The *researcher's family or personal conditions* have been little or not compatible with teleworking, making it impossible for him or her to advance his or her research work. This mainly concerns the tasks of educating or caring for his or her own children resulting from the closure of schools, or assistance to vulnerable persons within the meaning of Order 2 COVID-19 of 13 March 2020.
3. The researcher had to *contribute to exceptional tasks*, distinct from his or her research activities, either linked to the University's management of the crisis, such as the implementation of online courses, the preparation of distance examination sessions, increased interaction with students following this reorganization, or linked to service to the community following recruitment by hospitals, mobilization by the army or civil protection in the context of measures to combat the Covid-19.
4. The researcher was unable to meet the deadlines for submitting his or her pre-doctoral work following the Covid-19 related disruptions.

The provisions of the University's staff regulations concerning other reasons for extending appointments remain unchanged.

4.2. Request

A request for an extension may be submitted by persons of the status and functions defined above, whose situation related to the COVID-19 epidemic has impacted the progress of their personal research, for the benefit of an employment contract or a fellowship in progress as of April 1, 2020.

This request must be made by July 31, 2020 at the latest if the commitment or fellowship ends by October 31, 2020, and 4 to 6 months before the end of the commitment or fellowship if it ends after November 1, 2020.

The person completes an extension request ([online form](#), Part A) and certifies the truthfulness of his or her statements. If an extension beyond two months is requested, justification will be required. He or she sends the completed form to his or her supervisor.

The individual may choose to forward his or her request to one of the following academic supervisors: direct supervisor, director of his or her Doctoral school, head of his or her Department, or chair of his or her Section, so that this supervisor can give advance notice of the request.

The person in charge contacted:

- will notify the request via the form (part B) within 7 days of receipt;
- then sends to the administrator of his or her Faculty or Interfaculty Centre the documents related to the request for validation by the dean's office or centre management.

4.3. Examination of requests

The Dean of the Faculty or the Director of the Interfaculty Centre

- reviews requests for extensions notified in advance by the academic supervisor;
- gives reasons for his or her decision to approve or deny on the form (Part C);
- informs the academic supervisor of his or her decision.

The concerned supervisor informs the researcher by e-mail of the validation or refusal of his or her request by the Dean's office or the Centre's director.

In the event of validation of the extension request by the Faculty or the Interfaculty Centre, the supervisor shall inform the researcher of the steps taken to finance the extension and initiate the extension process with the Human Resources Division.

If the request for extension is refused by the Faculty or the Interfaculty Centre, the researcher may send his or her complete file, including the notice of the person in charge and the decision of the Faculty/Interfaculty Centre to the Rector's Office for a decision.

The researcher may not duplicate his or her application to an Interfaculty Centre if the Faculty has issued a refusal, and vice-versa.

4.4. Duration of extension

The duration of the extension is in the rule of 2 months.

Exceptionally, the University may extend the employment contract or salary grant for a period of up to a maximum of 6 months when one of the following conditions is met :

- despite the resumption of activities on 11 May, access to the data necessary for the research project has remained blocked;
- other closures ordered by the authorities (school closures, border closures) have prevented the researcher from carrying out the planned scientific work beyond the period of resumption of the University's activities ;
- the researcher was prevented from resuming his or her research because of community service as a result of recruitment by hospitals, mobilization by the army or civil defence in the context of measures to combat Covid-19.

Requests for extension, validated in principle by the Faculty or the Interfaculty Centre, which exceed a period of 2 months must be transmitted by the Faculty or the Interfaculty Centre to the Rectorate, which decides on the additional duration of the extension.

4.5. Form of extensions

The extension will be carried out at the end of the appointment or fellowship in force at the time of application and according to the contractual conditions in force at the time of the extension (status, contract year, salary base, amount of the grant).

5. Funding and monitoring

The financing of measures concerning the extension of the employment of doctoral assistants, post-doctoral assistants and senior assistants paid from the state budget is carried out via this budget (DIP budget).

The financing of measures concerning the extension of contracts or scholarships financed by funds from outside the State budget is ensured primarily by these funds. The Rector's Office invites the scientific directors to solicit funders for additional means to extend the contracts of the persons concerned. In cases where funders do not provide the necessary funds, scientific directors are encouraged to use their own institutional funds, or to request the contribution of their Department, Section, or Faculty.

Accepted applications that cannot find financial support from the funder, or within the research group, Department, Section or Faculty, must be forwarded by the Dean's office or the Centre's director to the Rectorate.

For these requests, the Rectorate may grant extraordinary funding from its own funds, provided that the scientific director cannot make internal reallocations in his or her budget or from the funds at his or her disposal, or that he or she can report an unsuccessful request for additional budget allocation to his or her donor, or that the donor has adopted a general policy of non-receipt of additional funds.

Monitoring of the measures and their costs is carried out by the Human Resources Division in conjunction with the Finance Division for appointments and by the Graduate Campus in conjunction with the Finance Division for scholarships.

6. Entry into force

This Directive shall enter into force on 20.05. 2020

Directive adopted by the Rectorate at its meeting of 20.05.2020